



Portrait of Mr. E. V. Lucas

E. V. LUCAS

TWENTIETH CENTURY ESSAYISTS

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DEDICATED TO
DR. A. D. LINDSAY, C.B.E.
MASTER OF BALLIOL, OXFORD
UNDER WHOSE BENEFICENT CARE I HAVE BEEN NURTURED

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CONCERNING DATES

I READ the other day of an Australian professor who, on arriving in London from Sydney for the purpose of attending an educational conference, discovered that he was twelve months in advance. The Conference was for the following year. He, therefore, at once re-embarked, and was, I presume, soon at work again as though nothing had happened, although his friends, I trust, did not forget to remind him of it. At any rate, he had the voyage, both out and home, and what could be better than that? And when the right time comes, I suppose he will have it again, and be something of a figure to boot; for though he may not shine at the Conference as an orator, he cannot fail to attract notice as the professor who was a year too soon. 'You have heard', this or that educationalist will say to his friend, 'of the man who

frequently breakfasts at five o'clock tea
And dines on the following day?

Well, there he is, over there: that Australian.'

This story is a welcome variation upon the ordinary examples of unpunctuality, which deal always with the people who are late. To be a year early is a real triumph, and I hope that the stone-cutter will remember this when the professor comes to die. In a world defaced, if not ruined, by those who keep us waiting, there should be

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an imperishable record of this unique anticipator. The phrase 'Sacred to the memory' has an ironical tang to it, yet let it stand :

Sacred to the memory
of
Professor ———
of
The Mnemonic Lyceum,
Sydney, N.S.W.

In addition to all the regular virtues, of which he had the generous supply with which it is usual to credit the dead, he was once a whole year early.

This professor, as his tombstone testifies, is an honest man, and would not deceive anybody, but he has, of course, invented a most attractive device for those who would absent themselves from duty two years running. It is now open to any of us with sufficient candour in our countenances and the wish to visit distant and alluring territory—say, for instance, South Africa—to arrange for an invitation to some kind of public function there next year, and then to obtain (under a misapprehension) permission from our chief to attend it at once ; thus ensuring a double holiday. In a country like England, where today almost every nerve seems to be strained in the direction of more and more vacations, this should be a very popular contrivance. The only difficulty would be in suitably comportsing the features on the day of return ; but that would be after the fun. As a matter of fact, we have never yet heard what the Sydney authorities had to say. . . .

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I have, in my time, once or twice been as much as a day early, but that was due not to any morbid desire of mine not to be late, but to a confusion in my hostess's mind between the day of the week and the date of the month. Such confusions are by no means rare, and, in fact, according to a sociological analyst whom I know, may be taken as a basis when we come to compare the differences in the characters of men and women. A woman, he says, thinks of days where a man thinks of dates. A woman will ask you to lunch on Wednesday next; a man will ask you to lunch on the 11th. Should the woman add a date and get it wrong—writing, for example, 'Wednesday, the 10th'—she still means Wednesday; whereas if the man adds the day—as, for example, 'Thursday, the 11th'—he still means the 11th, which is a Wednesday. It is, therefore, wise when issuing invitations to consult a calendar—being careful that it is of the current year; and having received an invitation, it is wise, on the morning of the day, to ring up and verify. But I hate ringing up.

Had I not so hated ringing up—for I am one of those increasingly astonishing and rapidly disappearing creatures who would rather write a letter and enclose it in an envelope and stick on the stamp and post it than speak one word on the telephone—I should not have arrived to dine a day too soon at the house of a new acquaintance: my first visit. And, incidentally, I may say that such a blunder would supply admirable material

for one of those Trials in Tact which used to be popular. What should the hostess do? In the present case my hostess received me without giving me the slightest hint that I was out of order ; we dined and had a pleasant evening ; but when the time came to say good-bye her last words were : 'You will remember that we are expecting you at eight tomorrow?' Could she have done less? Had she written this, or said it over the telephone, my blushes, it is true, would have been spared ; but then we should have missed the laughter and with it the cement that such a *faux pas*, with concomitant mirth, provides. There was the pretty compliment also that I was wanted again so soon.

On the matter of temperamental differences between men and women, my friend, I might add, has much that is ingenious to say. He has observed, for instance, that a man who is left in his home alone, for no matter how long, will punctiliously take his meals in the dining-room, with all the usual ceremonial about him, whereas his wife, similarly isolated, will snatch at a sandwich and some tea on the top of the piano. Other things that the best women do which the best men don't is to squeeze toothpaste tubes at the top ; look at the wrong part of the sky to foretell the weather ; relax their hold, when helping with an overcoat, at the precise moment when it should become tense ; put soap on sponges ; keep windows open in railway tunnels, and walk about during the over.

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But we are losing sight of the great date question, which is causing me just now no little trouble and even anxiety, for I had lately to read hundreds of letters written by men of eminence to Sidney Colvin, and hardly one of them mentions the year. Some say Monday. Some say April 8. Some say Monday, April 8. But hardly one adds the year. Nearly all, however, state where the letter is written. Among the writers are such distinguished persons as George Meredith, Henry James, Andrew Lang, Joseph Conrad, W. E. Henley. It is, of course, natural not to put the year, because the year is understood ; the writer knows it and the recipient knows it. But what about the poor biographer in the distant future? He has to seek all kinds of references in order to get his chronology right. I can conceive of no case where the omission of the date and the year is an advantage, although no doubt when falsified they might assist the fraudulent or the criminal ; but in the interests of biography their presence is essential, and I adjure any schoolmaster and schoolmistress who may read these words to impress the importance of them on their scholars, some of whom, of course, will in time attain such distinction and success as to be themselves the subject of the biographer's pen. Should these instructors not be willing to add such a matter to the curriculum, we must, all of us who receive letters from either the established great or the potentially famous, ourselves add the year before the precious documents are filed.

A ROMANTIC DEALER

THE death of Mr. Eustace Lancaster, the picture dealer, seems to have passed without comment, but he was, in his own way, a more remarkable man than many whose obituary notices are lengthy. The neglect may be explained, perhaps, by the fact that for the past few years he had given up active work at his premises in Clifford Street in order to serve as a travelling commissioner for the late Sir Andrew Mivart, the famous collector. In fact, almost all the recent additions to the wonderful Mivart Collection (which the privileged may see in Kensington Palace Gardens, and which, I understand, on his widow's death, will belong to the nation) were bought by Lancaster. I knew him well, and I can testify to the satisfaction which he felt when Sir Andrew appointed him his grand vizier. As a matter of fact, he was in no way suited to be a dealer in the ordinary sense of that word, for he hated the very idea of bargaining, had a soft heart, and having acquired a beautiful thing parted with it only with pangs. How he came to be a dealer at all was always a mystery; especially as his previous enterprise was bee-farming. But he made a living. He had the additional merit of looking the part and not lounging about like a heavy swell.

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I think it would be of interest if I set down, as nearly as I can remember, his own narration of the story of his meeting with Sir Andrew.

'One summer morning' (he said) 'I was told that a woman was in the gallery wanting to sell a picture.

'I left my little room behind the gallery and found a poor creature with a parcel. As she undid the string she told me that her husband was ill, and that they had decided to part with their landscape. They had no notion what it was worth.

'I could see in a flash that it was an exquisite example of the Barbizon school, and when I had carried it to the light there was no doubt it was a Corot—small, but perfect.

'“How did you come to have it?” I asked.

'She said that it had belonged to her husband's father, and they took it over, together with some bits of furniture, when he died. She would be sorry to lose it, it always brought such nice country thoughts into the room. It was a pretty thing, wasn't it?—almost like an oleo, it was so well done.

'“How much do you want for it?” I asked.

'“Would it be worth five pounds?” was her reply, put with the utmost timidity. Five pounds would make all the difference to her husband's condition. She could buy many necessities with it.

'“Excuse me a minute,” I said, and retired to my room. I felt that I must have time to think.

The picture might fetch from seven hundred to a thousand pounds at Christie's, but the season was over, and I, in my small way of business, might have to wait some long while—several months—to find a purchaser. It could be sold at once to a bigger dealer for, say, four hundred pounds. If I had been asked three hundred I should have given it—even three hundred and fifty. And here was the poor creature willing to take only a fiver!

'I was trying, you see, to get a fair price, for there was no question of taking advantage of such ignorance combined with such necessity.

'After being busy for a little while at my desk, I went out into the gallery again.

'“Here are five pounds,” I said, counting them into her hand. “But that isn't all I am going to give you. Here also is a cheque for three hundred and forty-five pounds, which you can get cashed at your leisure. The five pounds are for immediate wants.”

'She began to thank me.

'“It's a purely business transaction,” I said. “And self-protective, too. If I had given you only the five pounds you asked, I shouldn't be able to sleep at night, and that's unbearable.”

'She had only just left the place, dazed but radiant, when a tall man with a long, white beard came in.

'“I'd like to look round,” he said, and he began a tour of the walls.

'I left him alone, for it is a rule of mine not

A ROMANTIC DEALER

to tell people how good pictures are—I hate it so when other dealers tell me.

‘Coming to a stop before the Corot, which was still on the chair where I had put it, he asked the price.

‘I told him I couldn’t say. I had only just bought it, and had not had time to consider its future.

‘“How much did you give for it?” he asked.

‘“My dear Sir . . .” I began. This is not the kind of question that is put, and I was angry.

‘“It’s all right,” he said. “I was only going to offer you a hundred pounds profit, whatever it was. But as a matter of fact I don’t need to ask, because I know. I have the money you gave for it, here;” and he pulled from his pocket my little pink slip and the five notes.

‘“That picture was mine,” he said, “and that woman was my housekeeper. I wanted to test you. I’ve always admired your taste, but I didn’t know what kind of a man you were. I know now, and I want to make you an offer. Will you become my agent and help me add to my collection? My name is Mivart, Sir Andrew Mivart.”

‘My heart almost stopped beating; for we all know of Sir Andrew Mivart—the prince of picture collectors, the owner of the Belvedere Rembrandt, the Grand Duke Velasquez, the Roxburgh Gainsborough; and to be asked to associate with him, in a position of such trust, was a terrific testimonial.

" "You are very kind," I said. "And it is a great honour. But . . ."

" "Oh, yes, of course you will want time to think it over. I know that," he replied. "I'll come in again in a day or so, unless you write to me first. But I think I can make it worth your while, and I'm sure you're tired of dealing. Dealing, obviously, isn't your natural calling. You'd have some jolly times abroad, you know, and you would buy exactly as if you were going to hang the pictures on your own walls."

" "That's too much of a compliment," I said.

" "Not at all," he replied; "our tastes coincide. I wish I didn't have to delegate this job; it would be such fun getting ahead of the Americans; but if I'm to go on collecting I must go on making the money, and that means staying at home."

" "I'll tell you tomorrow," I said. "The fact is, at the moment I'm a little dizzy. It is all too sudden. And I haven't really got over the transaction with your housekeeper. By the way, if she's ever tired of keeping house, there's a great future for her on the stage."

"He laughed.

" "We rehearsed it together," he said.

" "And suppose I had given her the five pounds?" I asked.

" "Oh, she would have withdrawn the picture in double quick time. It depends," he said, "on whether you join me or not. If you join me, the picture, is mine and I return your cheque; but if

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you refuse, why, I'm afraid, in fairness, I must relinquish it to the honest dealer who bought it.'''

That is the story, highly creditable both to employer and employed.

I am sorry that I shall not see Lancaster again. He seems to have taken chill in an open car—not a very difficult thing to do—and it struck deep. He was unmarried. Also, perhaps I ought to add, he never existed.

A FRIEND OF THE TOWN

LONDONERS know much, but not all. A few secrets are still to be learned only in the provinces, and one of them is the true value of the bookstall man. In London a bookstall man is a machine ; you throw pennies at him and in return he throws papers at you. Now and then he asks you to buy something that you don't want or recommends the new sevenpenny ; but for the most part he treats you as a stranger, if not as a foe, and expects for himself treatment no better.

But in the country . . .

Make your home in a small country town and see how long you can manage without becoming friendly with the bookstall man. For in the country he is a power. There is no longer any casual flinging of pennies ; there is the weather to discuss, and a remark to drop on the headlines in the contents bill. 'Another all-night sitting,' you say, from the security given by eight good hours in bed : 'ah well, if people like to be Members of Parliament, let them !' Then you both laugh. Or, 'What's this?—another new Peer? Well, it will be your turn soon,' you say,—and then you both laugh again. But there is something more important than persiflage and gossip—there is the new novel to choose from the circulating library. For in the country the bookstall man is

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also the librarian and adviser ; he not only sells papers but he controls the reading of the neighbourhood. His advice is sound. His instinct dictates wisely. 'Jacobs's latest,' he says, 'is splendid. I read it on Sunday.' Not, of course, that he has any need to read a story to know that it is splendid ; that would be too mechanical. He knows because he possesses the sixth sense with which successful handlers of books are gifted. 'What's new?' he replies, 'well, here's something good. Take that. You can't go wrong.' Or, when in a dissuading mood (and nowadays librarians have to dissuade as much as recommend, poor doomed varmint), 'That one? Oh ! I don't think she would like that. That's a little bit—well, it's strong, that's what it is. I don't recommend that. But here's a charming story by the author of *Milk and Water* . . .' And so forth.

What some simple country people would do without their bookstall man I can't imagine. Take Peter, for instance. Peter was the friend of three old ladies who lived in a southern seaport—a sleepy forgotten town with quiet, narrow, Georgian streets and vast stretches of mud in its harbour which the evening sun turned to gold. These three old ladies—sisters and unmarried—lived together in a tiny red-brick house where their several personalities dovetailed perfectly, different as they were. One was the practical managing sister, one was the humorous commentator, and one was the kindly dreamer. All were generous and philanthropic ; indeed their benefactions of thought

and deed were the principal business of their placid lives, while the principal recreation was reading. And hercin lay the value of Peter, the bookstall man, for it was through his library that all their books came to them. He too divined the character of the books that he circulated by the mere process of touch ; and he was rarely wrong. He knew to a grain exactly what was to be found in every book he recommended or did not recommend to these old ladies. In so far as his recommendations went, Peter was always right ; and probably his dissuasions were rightly based too, although that of course we shall never know, since his advice was duly taken.

But it is no light matter, is it, to pick out suitable stories for three old-fashioned old ladies with very decided views as to what is fitting and nice, and what not, when the books (and here is the real difficulty) were to be read aloud? For this meant of course that the three personalities had to be taken into consideration. Each book had to please, or at any rate not offend, an old lady who was of a practical managing turn, and an old lady who was herself a bit of a quiz (as all good novelists must be), and an old lady who had Utopian dreams.

Peter, you see, must have been rather remarkable. 'No,' he would say, 'I don't think Miss Dorcas would like that . . . the gambling passages. . . . I'd recommend this if it weren't for Miss Kate. But she'd never like the divorce proceedings. . . .' And so on.

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Reading aloud was to these old ladies a kind of ritual. They looked forward to it all day, and then as each chapter was finished they discussed it and approved or disapproved. When it comes to analysing the pleasures of life, the privilege of approving and disapproving in conversation must be ranked very high, and reading aloud makes it so very harmless an amusement, since no tale-bearing is involved. This they did, and not only during the reading but at meals too, and often they would come down to breakfast after a rather wakeful night with new theories as to the conduct of hero or heroine. Happy Peter, to set so much gentle machinery in motion !

Of course, he was not able always to satisfy their programme. Sometimes for weeks and weeks together no new books (not only fiction, of course : memoirs and travels they were very fond of) would be published ; but when he really struck gold how happy they all were. I remember that I found them once—it was thirteen years ago—in a state of joyful excitement over one of Peter's most inspired suggestions—Miss Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*. Never could three old ladies of simple tastes and warm hearts have been more delighted with a printed page. I wished Peter could have seen them.

Is he still acting as friend to that little town, I wonder. He was so capable that probably he has been promoted to a wider sphere. For that is what happens to these friends of the small town : they are raised to positions of more

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importance and better salaries, and the chances are that the old personal intimacy goes altogether. They may, for example, be elevated to the place of manager at, say, London Bridge. Then is all their kindness and thoughtfulness over: they become machines: very targets for pennies and half-pennies all day long, with no time for the humaner intercourse.

Well, the price of getting on has always been heavy; but here it is paid not only by the friend but by the small town too. It is hard when nice old ladies are also penalized.

OTHER PEOPLE'S BOOKS

EULOGIES of books are among the commonplaces of all essayists ; but the books they eulogize are rarely the right ones. 'Among my Books' they entitle these embroideries, or 'The Friends that Fail Not,' or 'In my Library'— and then follow the pleasant praises of reading. But it is not true to the fact. The fact to be true to is, that although we have books in plenty, it is the books of other people that give us our thrills.

The poets also perpetuate this error. Mr. Dobson, for example, writes charmingly of his favourites on the unglazed shelves : the bulged and the bruised octavos, the dear and the dumpy twelves ; and Mr. Dobson's disciples who pursue the same convention are many, both here and in America, where indeed book-loving in public is carried to a point that it has never reached in England, the possessors of treasured tomes caressing them in the broad light of day as if there were no such thing as shame at all.

Illusions again ; for all the while, of course, one's own books do not satisfy one in the least ; it is one's friends' books that one reads and really desires.

This is the secret which no essayist and no poet has either ever discovered or has ever had sufficient courage to put into print : all the best books belong to other people.

It is more than a secret, it is a tragedy, because do what one will one cannot have the same books as other people. If one were to go to a book-seller and lead him to a friend's house, and say, 'Spare no expense; make me an exact reproduction of this library,' he could not do it. Something would be missing. The next time one visited one's friend again, one would see his latest acquisition, and it would be so desirable that it would take away the flavour of all the other books; although as a matter of fact that would have gone already, because they had become one's own and no longer were another's. Naboth, you know, not only had a vineyard but was a great reader. Uriah the Hittite had a library as well as a wife.

It is a strange world, and man is the strangest thing in it. Why, there are men who apologize for being found looking at one's books; who say, 'I hope you don't mind my glancing at your shelves!' There are even men who ask leave before they look at one's pictures, when, to a large extent, it is only that others may admire them that one has pictures at all. But here the subject becomes too painful. Other people's books one may write about with some lightness, because other people's books (except first folios and such delicacies) can be duplicated and become one's own; but other people's paintings there's tragedy there!

Another mystery is that there should be so many books of which one has never heard.

'Where do other people find their books? How

OTHER PEOPLE'S BOOKS

do they hear of them?' said a bookman the other day—a bookman beneath whose eyes tens of thousands of volumes must have passed in his time. Said he: 'There is a romantic and picturesque poet whom I visited recently in his home—I had almost written stronghold—enised in the green pastures and woods of a thinly-populated country. I went to see himself and his natural surroundings and the beautiful creatures that he cherishes; but what I chiefly remember is the fleeting glance of rows and rows of books whose titles even I had never heard of: books that it needed such a rare mind as his to bring together.' That is a common and very galling experience. Even the most recondite readers feel it; even W. P. K— feels it.

There are even inns that have books that one wants—but there is no fixed rule here, because inn libraries are not reflections of a personality but fortuitous aggregations of derelicts. 'But I was once in an inn parlour,' said another reader recently, 'which had only three books, and one of them was the Poetical Works of Mr. Thomas Little, the quite amusing and improper amorous verses with which Moore began his career, and a rare volume. It is no longer in that inn parlour,' he added. (Why are book-lovers so dishonest?)

I do not suggest that one has this covetous feeling in a public library, or in the British Museum Reading Room, or even in a bookshop. One may lack the books one sees there, but one does not covet them. The reason, I think, is that that which one is coveting in a friend's room

as one looks at his shelves is not (if one only knew it) so much certain of his books as the temperament that made certain of his books necessary to him. One is for the moment envious of his character. One wants the book because it is his ; one almost resents the circumstance that he should have had the wit or the sympathy to acquire that work. The cheek of the man !

And yet even the automatic book-buyers have books that one wants—books to discontent one a little with one's own—although of course they have them in no such profusion as the genuine book-buyers. The modern series of reprints at a low figure have multiplied these mechanical fellows enormously. 'I was looking round the shelves of one such only last week,' remarked a third acquaintance talking on this topic, 'and I found *Friendship's Garland*. He had never read it, he said, but "he liked to have all Arnold"'. (What a man !) I have read it more than once, but for some reason or other I haven't a copy. Why haven't I a copy? What is the meaning of these amazing gaps? I never did have a copy ; I borrowed it. But why haven't I a copy? Why has that ass a copy while I haven't? I keep on asking the question because there is more in it than one supposes. There is a mystery in it.'

The answer is of course that a strange subterranean force arranges that we shall always be without many of the books we ought to have, and that our friends will have them instead. That is the answer.

THE LORD OF LIFE

'What right has that man to have a spaniel?' said a witty lady, pointing to a bully: 'spaniels should be a reward.'

IN his prescription for the perfect home Southey included a little girl rising six years and a kitten rising six weeks. That is perhaps the prettiest thing that ever found its way from his pen—that patient, plodding, bread-winning pen, which he drove with such pathetic industry as long as he had any power left with which to urge it forward. A little girl rising six years and a kitten rising six weeks. Charming, isn't it?

But, my dear rascally Lake Poet, what about a puppy rising six months? How did you come to forget that?—such a puppy as is in this room as I write: a small black puppy of the Cocker spaniel blood, so black that had the good God not given him a gleaming white corner to his wicked little eye, one would not know at dinner whether he was sitting by one's side or not—not, that is, until his piercing shrieks, signifying that he had been (very properly) trodden on again, rent the welkin.

This puppy have I called the Lord of Life because I cannot conceive of a more complete embodiment of vitality, curiosity, success, and tyranny. Vitality, first and foremost. It is

incredible that so much pulsating quicksilver, so much energy and purpose, should be packed into a foot and a half of black hide. He is up earliest in the morning, he retires last at night. He sleeps in the day, it is true, but it is sleep that hangs by a thread. Let there be a footfall out of place, let a strange dog in the street venture but to breathe a little louder than usual, let the least rattle of plates strike upon his ear, and his sleep is shaken from him in an instant. From an older dog one expects some of this watchfulness. For an absurd creature of four months with one foot still in the cradle to be so charged with vigilance is too ridiculous.

If nothing occurs to interest him, and his eyes are no longer heavy (heavy ! he never had heavy eyes), he will make drama for himself. He will lay a slipper at your feet and bark for it to be thrown. I admire him most when he is returning with it in his mouth. The burden gives him responsibility : his four black feet, much too big for his body, all move at once with a new importance and rhythm. When he runs for the slipper he is just so much galvanized puppy rioting with life ; when he returns he is an official, a guardian, a trustee : his eye is grave and responsible ; the conscientious field spaniel wakes in him and asserts itself.

As to his curiosity, it knows no bounds. He must be acquainted with all that happens. What kind of a view of human life a dog, even a big dog acquires, I have sometimes tried to imagine by

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kneeling or lying full length on the ground and looking up. The world then becomes strangely incomplete: one sees little but legs. Of course the human eye is set differently in the head, and a dog can visualize humanity without injuring his neck as I must do in that grovelling posture; but none the less the dog's view of his master standing over him must be very partial, very fragmentary. Yet this little puppy, although his eyes are within eight inches of the ground, gives the impression that he sees all. He goes through the house with a microscope.

But for his dependence, his curiosity, and his proprietary instinct to be studied at their best, you should see him in an empty house. All dogs like to explore empty houses with their masters, but none more than he. His paws never so resound as when they patter over the bare boards of an empty house. He enters each room with the eye of a builder, tenant, auctioneer, furnisher, and decorator in one. I never saw such comprehensive glances, such a nose for a colour scheme. But leave him by accident behind a closed door and see what happens. Not the mandrake torn bleeding from its earth ever shrieked more melancholy. But tears are instant with him always, in spite of his native cheerfulness. It was surely a puppy that inspired the proverb about crying before you are hurt.

I spoke of his success. That is perhaps his most signal characteristic, for the world is at his feet. Whether indoors or out he has his own

way, instantly follows his own inclination. It is one of his most charming traits that he thinks visibly. I often watch him thinking. 'Surely it's time tea was brought,' I can positively see him saying to himself. 'I hope that cake wasn't finished yesterday: it was rather more decent than usual. I believe those girls eat it in the kitchen.' Or, 'He's putting on his heavy boots: that means the hill. Good! I'll get near the door so as to be sure of slipping out with him.' Or, 'It's no good: he's not going for a walk this morning. That stupid old desk again, I suppose.' Or, 'Who was that? Oh, only the postman. I shan't bark for him.' Or, 'I'm getting awfully hungry. I'll go and worry the cook.'

In what way a dog expresses these thoughts I have no guess (it is one of the leading counts in the indictment of science that it knows nothing about dogs and does not try to learn); but one can see the words passing in procession through his little mind as clearly as if it were made of glass.

But the most visible token of his success is the attention, the homage, he receives from strangers. For he not only dominates the house, but he has a procession of admirers after him in the streets. Little girls and middle-aged ladies equally ask permission to pat him. Old gentlemen (the villains!) ask if he is for sale, and inquire his price. Not that he looks valuable—as a matter of fact, though pure he is not remarkable—but that he suggests so much companionship and fun. One recognizes instantly the Vital Spark.

THE LORD OF LIFE

When it comes to the consideration of his tyranny, there enters a heavy spaniel named Bush and a dainty capricious egoist in blue-grey fur whom we will call Smoke. Smoke once had a short way with dogs; but the Lord of Life has changed all that. Smoke once would draw back a paw of velvet, dart it forward like the tongue of a serpent and return to sleep again, perfectly secure in her mind that that particular dog would harass her no more. But do you think she ever hurt the puppy in that way? Never. He loafs into the room with his hands in his pockets and his head full of mischief, perceives a long bushy blue-grey tail hanging over the edge of the sofa, and forthwith gives it such a pull with his teeth as a Siberian householder who had been out late and had lost his latch-key might at his door-bell when the wolves were after him. An ordinary dog would be blinded for less; but not so our friend. Smoke merely squeaks reproach, and in a minute or two, when the puppy has tired a little of the game, he is found not only lying beside her and stealing her warmth, but lying in the very centre of the nest in the cushion that she had fashioned for herself. Tyranny, if you like!

And Bush? Poor Bush. For every spoiled newcomer there is, I suppose, throughout life an old faithful friend who finds himself on the shelf. It is not quite so bad as this with Bush, and when the puppy grows up and is staid too, Bush will return to his own again; but I must admit that

at the beginning he had a very hard time of it. For the puppy, chiefly by hanging on his ear, first infuriated him into sulks, and then, his mastery being recognized, set to work systematically to tease and bully him. The result is that now Bush actually has to ask permission before he dares to take up his old seat by my chair; he may have it only if the puppy does not want it.

Bush, I ought to say, has lately been tried by a succession of new dogs; and although the present puppy is his most powerful super-dog, he allowed all to acquire an improper influence and knuckled under with deplorable tameness. The first interloper was an Aberdeen, who taught him to rove. Before that he had never left the garden alone; now he began to absent himself for hours, sometimes whole nights. It was all Scottie's doing, one could see. That small but insidious creature was of original sin compact—was everything that Bush was not. Scottie was unwilling, disobedient, independent, impenitent. When we went out for a walk he started with me punctually enough; but he returned alone. At what point he disappeared, I never knew. He dissolved.

At night—for their kennels adjoined—he sapped Bush's character.

'Directly we are let loose, tomorrow,' he would say, 'let's go up to the Common and hunt.'

'No,' said Bush; 'they wouldn't like it. *He* would not like it.' (I am *He*.)

'Oh, never mind him,' said Scottie. 'After all,

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what does it mean? Only a whack or two, and it's all over.'

'But we shall be tied up all day.'

'No, you won't. Just keep on barking and whining, and they'll let you loose in self-defence.'

(He knew what he was talking about here, for on one cold night he won his way back into the house entirely by this device. The little black-guard !)

After a while Bush consented.

I had proof one night of the ascendancy which Scottie (aged ten months) had obtained over Bush (aged five years). I chained them up and went for some water. When I returned, Scottie was in Bush's large kennel, where he had no right; but it was warmer. 'Come out,' I said. But instead of coming out, Scottie whispered threateningly to Bush: 'You go'; and out crawled the spaniel and abjectly began to squeeze his shoulders into Scottie's minute abode.

I should not be surprised if these conversations are not minutely true to life; but one can, of course, never know: not at any rate until one meets Cerberus on the banks of the Styx—as we all must—and puts a few leading questions to him as to dog nature, while waiting for the ferry.

But Bush is not my theme; Bush was never a Lord of Life: his pulse was always a little slow, his nature a little too much inclined to accept rather than initiate. Nor, I suppose, will our Lord of Life be quite such a Lord much longer, for with

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age will come an increase of sobriety, a diminution of joy. That he will not untimely fall by the way, but will grow up to serious spanielhood, I feel as sure as if an angel had forewarned me ; but were he now to die this should be his epitaph :—‘Here lies a Lord of Life, aged six months. He would never be broken to the house, but was adorable after sin.’



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Portrait by Mr. P. O. Hoppé

THE MOWING OF A FIELD

THERE is a valley in South England remote from ambition and from fear, where the passage of strangers is rare and unperceived, and where the scent of the grass in summer is breathed only by those who are native to that unvisited land. The roads to the Channel do not traverse it; they choose upon either side easier passes over the range. One track alone leads up through it to the hills, and this is changeable: now green where men have little occasion to go, now a good road where it nears the homesteads and the barns. The woods grow steep above the slopes; they reach sometimes the very summit of the heights, or, when they cannot attain them, fill in and clothe the coombes. And, in between, along the floor of the valley, deep pastures and their silence are bordered by lawns of chalky grass and the small yew trees of the Downs.

The clouds that visit its sky reveal themselves beyond the one great rise, and sail, white and enormous, to the other, and sink beyond that other. But the plains above which they have travelled and the Weald to which they go, the people of the valley cannot see and hardly recall. The wind, when it reaches such fields, is no longer a gale from the salt, but fruitful and soft, an inland breeze; and those whose blood was nourished

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here feel in that wind the fruitfulness of our orchards and all the life that all things draw from the air.

In this place, when I was a boy, I pushed through a fringe of beeches that made a complete screen between me and the world, and I came to a glade called No Man's Land. I climbed beyond it, and I was surprised and glad, because from the ridge of that glade I saw the sea. To this place very lately I returned.

The many things that I recovered as I came up the countryside were not less charming than when a distant memory had enshrined them, but much more. Whatever veil is thrown by a longing recollection had not intensified nor even made more mysterious the beauty of that happy ground; not in my very dreams of morning had I, in exile, seen it more beloved or more rare. Much also that I had forgotten now returned to me as I approached—a group of elms, a little turn of the parson's wall, a small paddock beyond the graveyard close, cherished by one man, with a low wall of very old stone guarding it all round. And all these things fulfilled and amplified my delight, till even the good vision of the place, which I had kept so many years, left me and was replaced by its better reality. 'Here,' I said to myself, 'is a symbol of what some say is reserved for the soul: pleasure of a kind which cannot be imagined save in a moment when at last it is attained.'

When I came to my own gate and my own field, and had before me the house I knew, I looked

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around a little (though it was already evening), and I saw that the grass was standing as it should stand when it is ready for the scythe. For in this, as in everything that a man can do—of those things at least which are very old—there is an exact moment when they are done best. And it has been remarked of whatever rules us that it works blunderingly, seeing that the good things given to man are not given at the precise moment when they would have filled him with delight. But, whether this be true or false, we can choose the just turn of the seasons in everything we do of our own will, and especially in the making of hay. Many think that hay is best made when the grass is thickest ; and so they delay until it is rank and in flower, and has already heavily pulled the ground. And there is another false reason for delay, which is wet weather. For very few will understand (though it comes year after year) that we have rain always in South England between the sickle and the scythe, or say just after the weeks of east wind are over. First we have a week of sudden warmth, as though the South had come to see us all ; then we have the weeks of east and south-east wind ; and then we have more or less of that rain of which I spoke, and which always astonishes the world. Now it is just before, or during, or at the very end of that rain—but not later—that grass should be cut for hay. True, upland grass, which is always thin, should be cut earlier than the grass in the bottoms and along the water meadows ; but not even the latest, even in the

wettest seasons, should be left (as it is) to flower and even to seed. For what we get when we store our grass is not a harvest of something ripe, but a thing just caught in its prime before maturity : as witness that our corn and straw are best yellow, but our hay is best green. So also Death should be represented with a scythe and Time with a sickle ; for Time can take only what is ripe, but Death comes always too soon. In a word, then, it is always much easier to cut grass too late than too early ; and I, under that evening and come back to these pleasant fields, looked at the grass and knew that it was time. June was in full advance : it was the beginning of that season when the night has already lost her foothold of the earth and hovers over it, never quite descending, but mixing sunset with the dawn.

Next morning, before it was yet broad day, I awoke, and thought of the mowing. The birds were already chattering in the trees beside my window, all except the nightingale, which had left and flown away to the Weald, where he sings all summer by day as well as by night in the oaks and the hazel spinneys, and especially along the little river Adur, one of the rivers of the Weald. The birds and the thought of the mowing had awakened me, and I went down the stairs and along the stone floors to where I could find a scythe ; and when I took it from its nail, I remembered how, fourteen years ago, I had last gone out with my scythe, just so, into the fields at morning. In between

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that day and this were many things, cities and armies, and a confusion of books, mountains and the desert, and horrible great breadths of sea.

When I got out into the long grass the sun was not yet risen, but there were already many colours in the eastern sky, and I made haste to sharpen my scythe, so that I might get to the cutting before the dew should dry. Some say that it is best to wait till all the dew has risen, so as to get the grass quite dry from the very first. But, though it is an advantage to get the grass quite dry, yet it is not worth while to wait till the dew has risen. For, in the first place, you lose many hours of work (and those the coolest), and next—which is more important—you lose that great ease and thickness in cutting which comes of the dew. So I at once began to sharpen my scythe.

There is an art also in the sharpening of a scythe, and it is worth describing carefully. Your blade must be dry, and that is why you will see men rubbing the scythe-blade with grass before they whet it. Then also your rubber must be quite dry, and on this account it is a good thing to lay it on your coat and keep it there during all your day's mowing. The scythe you stand upright, with the blade pointing away from you, and you put your left hand firmly on the back of the blade, grasping it: then you pass the rubber first down one side of the blade-edge and then down the other, beginning near the handle and going on to the point and working quickly and hard. When you first do this you will, perhaps, cut your hand; but it is

only at first that such an accident will happen to you.

To tell when the scythe is sharp enough this is the rule. First the stone clangs and grinds against the iron harshly ; then it rings musically to one note ; then, at last, it purrs as though the iron and stone were exactly suited. When you hear this, your scythe is sharp enough ; and I, when I heard it that June dawn, with everything quite silent except the birds, let down the scythe and bent myself to mow.

When one does anything anew, after so many years, one fears very much for one's trick or habit. But all things once learnt are easily recoverable, and I very soon recovered the swing and power of the mower. Mowing well and mowing badly or rather not mowing at all—are separated by very little ; as is also true of writing verse, of playing the fiddle, and of dozens of other things, but of nothing more than of believing. For the bad or young or untaught mower without tradition, the mower Promethean, the mower original and contemptuous of the past, does all these things : he leaves great crescents of grass uncut. He digs the point of the scythe hard into the ground with a jerk. He loosens the handles and even the fastening of the blade. He twists the blade with his blunders, he blunts the blade, he chips it, dulls it, or breaks it clean off at the tip. If any one is standing by he cuts him in the ankle. He sweeps up into the air wildly, with nothing to resist his stroke. He drags up earth with the

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grass, which is like making the meadow bleed. But the good mower who does things just as they should be done and have been for a hundred thousand years, falls into none of these fooleries. He goes forward very steadily, his scythe-blade just barely missing the ground, every grass falling; the swish and rhythm of his mowing are always the same.

So great an art can only be learnt by continual practice; but this much is worth writing down, that, as in all good work, to know the thing with which you work is the core of the affair. Good verse is best written on good paper with an easy pen, not with a lump of coal on a whitewashed wall. The pen thinks for you; and so does the scythe mow for you if you treat it honourably and in a manner that makes it recognize its service: The manner is this. You must regard the scythe as a pendulum that swings, not as a knife that cuts. A good mower puts no more strength into his stroke than into his lifting. Again, stand up to your work. The bad mower, eager and full of pain, leans forward and tries to force the scythe through the grass. The good mower, serene and able, stands as nearly straight as the shape of the scythe will let him, and follows up every stroke closely, moving his left foot forward. Then also let every stroke get well away. Mowing is a thing of ample gestures, like drawing a cartoon. Then, again, get yourself into a mechanical and repetitive mood: be thinking of anything at all but your mowing, and be anxious only when there seems

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some interruption to the monotony of the sound. In this mowing should be like one's prayers—all of a sort and always the same, and so made that you can establish a monotony and work them, as it were, with half your mind: that happier half, the half that does not bother.

In this way, when I had recovered the art after so many years, I went forward over the field, cutting lane after lane through the grass, and bringing out its most secret essences with the sweep of the scythe until the air was full of odours. At the end of every lane I sharpened my scythe and looked back at the work done, and then carried my scythe down again upon my shoulder to begin another. So, long before the bell rang in the chapel above me—that is, long before six o'clock, which is the time for the *Angelus*—I had many swathes already lying in order parallel like soldiery; and the high grass yet standing, making a great contrast with the shaven part, looked dense and high. As it says in the *Ballad of Val-ès-Dunes*, where—

The tall son of the Seven Winds
Came riding out of Hither-hythe,

and his horse-hoofs (you will remember) trampled into the press and made a gap in it, and his sword (as you know)

. . . was like a scythe
In Arcus when the grass is high
And all the swathes in order lie,
And there's the bailiff standing by
A-gathering of the tithe.

THE MOWING OF A FIELD

So I mowed all that morning, till the houses awoke in the valley, and from some of them rose a little fragrant smoke, and men began to be seen.

I stood still and rested on my scythe to watch the awakening of the village, when I saw coming up to my field a man whom I had known in older times, before I had left the Valley.

He was of that dark silent race upon which all the learned quarrel, but which, by whatever meaningless name it may be called—Iberian, or Celtic, or what you will—is the permanent root of all England, and makes England wealthy and preserves it everywhere, except perhaps in the Fens and in a part of Yorkshire. Everywhere else you will find it active and strong. These people are intensive: their thoughts and their labours turn inward. It is on account of their presence in these islands that our gardens are the richest in the world. They also love low rooms and ample fires and great warm slopes of thatch. They have, as I believe, an older acquaintance with the English air than any other of all the strains that make up England. They hunted in the Weald with stones, and camped in the pines of the green-sand. They lurked under the oaks of the upper rivers, and saw the legionaries go up, up the straight paved road from the sea. They helped the few pirates to destroy the towns, and mixed with those pirates and shared the spoils of the Roman villas, and were glad to see the captains and the priests destroyed. They remain; and no admixture of the Frisian pirates, or the Breton,

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or the Angevin and Norman conquerors, has very much affected their cunning eyes.

To this race, I say, belonged the man who now approached me. And he said to me, 'Mowing?' And I answered, 'Ar.' Then he also said 'Ar,' as in duty bound; for so we speak to each other in the Stenes of the Downs.

Next he told me that, as he had nothing to do, he would lend me a hand; and I thanked him warmly, or, as we say, 'kindly.' For it is a good custom of ours always to treat bargaining as though it were a courteous pastime; and though what he was after was money, and what I wanted was his labour at the least pay, yet we both played the comedy that we were free men, the one granting a grace and the other accepting it. For the dry bones of commerce, avarice and method and need, are odious to the Valley; and we cover them up with a pretty body of fiction and observances. Thus, when it comes to buying pigs, the buyer does not begin to decry the pig and the vendor to praise it, as is the custom with lesser men; but tradition makes them do business in this fashion:—

First the buyer will go up to the seller when he sees him in his own steading, and, looking at the pig with admiration, the buyer will say that rain may or may not fall, or that we shall have snow or thunder, according to the time of year. Then the seller, looking critically at the pig, will agree that the weather is as his friend maintains. There is no haste at all; great leisure marks the dignity of

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their exchange. And the next step is, that the buyer says : 'That's a fine pig you have there, Mr.——' (giving the seller's name). 'Ar, powerful fine pig.' Then the seller, saying also 'Mr.' (for twin brothers rocked in one cradle give each other ceremonious observance here), the seller, I say, admits, as though with reluctance, the strength and beauty of the pig, and falls into deep thought. Then the buyer says, as though moved by a great desire, that he is ready to give so much for the pig, naming half the proper price, or a little less. Then the seller remains in silence for some moments ; and at last begins to shake his head slowly, till he says : 'I don't be thinking of selling the pig, anyways.' He will also add that a party only Wednesday offered him so much for the pig—and he names about double the proper price. Thus all ritual is duly accomplished ; and the solemn act is entered upon with reverence and in a spirit of truth. For when the buyer uses this phrase : 'I'll tell you what I *will* do,' and offers within half a crown of the pig's value, the seller replies that he can refuse him nothing, and names half a crown above its value ; the difference is split, the pig is sold, and in the quiet soul of each runs the peace of something accomplished.

Thus do we buy a pig or land or labour or malt or lime, always with elaboration and set forms ; and many a London man has paid double and more for his violence and his greedy haste and very unchivalrous higgling. As happened with the land at Underwaltham, which the mortgagees had

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begged and implored the estate to take at twelve hundred, and had privately offered to all the world at a thousand, but which a sharp direct man, of the kind that makes great fortunes, a man in a motor-car, a man in a fur coat, a man of few words, bought for two thousand three hundred before my very eyes, protesting that they might take his offer or leave it; and all because he did not begin by praising the land.

Well then, this man I spoke of offered to help me, and he went to get his scythe. But I went into the house and brought out a gallon jar of small ale for him and for me; for the sun was now very warm, and small ale goes well with mowing. When we had drunk some of this ale in mugs called 'I see you', we took each a swathe, he a little behind me because he was the better mower; and so for many hours we swung, one before the other, mowing and mowing at the tall grass of the field. And the sun rose to noon and we were still at our mowing; and we ate food, but only for a little while, and we took again to our mowing. And at last there was nothing left but a small square of grass, standing like a square of linesmen who keep their formation, tall and unbroken, with all the dead lying around them when a battle is over and done.

Then for some little time I rested after all those hours; and the man and I talked together, and a long way off we heard in another field the musical sharpening of a scythe.

The sunlight slanted powdered and mellow over

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the breadth of the valley ; for day was nearing its end. I went to fetch rakes from the steading ; and when I had come back the last of the grass had fallen, and all the field lay flat and smooth, with the very green short grass in lanes between the dead and yellow swathes.

These swathes we raked into cocks to keep them from the dew against our return at daybreak ; and we made the cocks as tall and steep as we could, for in that shape they best keep off the dew, and it is easier also to spread them after the sun has risen. Then we raked up every straggling blade, till the whole field was a clean floor for the tedding and the carrying of the hay next morning. The grass we had mown was but a little over two acres ; for that is all the pasture on my little tiny farm.

When we had done all this, there fell upon us the beneficent and deliberate evening ; so that as we sat a little while together near the rakes, we saw the valley more solemn and dim around us, and all the trees and hedgerows quite still, and held by a complete silence. Then I paid my companion his wage, and bade him a good night, till we should meet in the same place before sunrise.

He went off with a slow and steady progress, as all our peasants do, making their walking a part of the easy but continual labour of their lives. But I sat on, watching the light creep around towards the north and change, and the waning moon coming up as though by stealth behind the woods of No Man's Land.

ON A DOG AND A MAN ALSO

THERE lives in the middle of the Weald upon the northern edge of a small wood where a steep brow of orchard pasture goes down to a little river, a Recluse who is of middle age and possessed of all the ordinary accomplishments ; that is, French and English literature are familiar to him, he can himself compose, he has read his classical Latin and can easily decipher such Greek as he has been taught in youth. He is unmarried, he is by birth a gentleman, he enjoys an income sufficient to give him food and wine, and has for companion a dog who, by the standard of dogs, is somewhat more elderly than himself.

This dog is called Argus, not that he has a hundred eyes nor even two, indeed he has but one ; for the other, or right eye, he lost the sight of long ago from luxury and lack of exercise. This dog Argus is neither small nor large ; he is brown in colour and covered—though now but partially—with curly hair. In this he resembles many other dogs, but he differs from most of his breed in a further character, which is that by long association with a Recluse he has acquired a human manner that is unholy. He is fond of affected poses. When he sleeps it is with that abandonment of fatigue only naturally to be found in mankind. He watches sunsets and listens

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mournfully to music. Cooked food is dearer to him than raw, and he will eat nuts—a monstrous thing in a dog and proof of corruption.

Nevertheless, or, rather, on account of all this, the dog Argus is exceedingly dear to his master, and of both I had the other day a singular revelation when I set out at evening to call upon my friend.

The sun had set, but the air was still clear and it was light enough to have shot a bat (had there been bats about and had one had a gun) when I knocked at the cottage door and opened it. Right within, one comes to the first of the three rooms which the Recluse possesses, and there I found him tenderly nursing the dog Argus, who lay groaning in the arm-chair and putting on all the airs of a Christian man at the point of death.

The Recluse did not even greet me, but asked me only in a hurried way how I thought the dog Argus looked. I answered gravely and in a low tone so as not to disturb the sufferer, that as I had not seen him since Tuesday, when he was, for an elderly dog, in the best of health, he certainly presented a sad contrast, but that perhaps he was better than he had been some few hours before, and that the Recluse himself would be the best judge of that.

My friend was greatly relieved at what I said, and told me that he thought the dog was better, compared at least with that same morning; then, whether you believe it or not, he took him by the left leg just above the paw and held it for a little

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time as though he were feeling a pulse, and said, 'He came back less than twenty-four hours ago!' It seemed that the dog Argus, for the first time in fourteen years, had run away, and that for the first time in perhaps twenty or thirty years the emotion of loss had entered into the life of the Recluse, and that he had felt something outside books and outside the contemplation of the landscape about his hermitage.

In a short time the dog fell into a slumber, as was shown by a number of grunts and yaps which proved his sleep, for the dog Argus is of that kind which hunts in dreams. His master covered him reverently rather than gently with an Indian cloth and, still leaving him in the arm-chair, sat down upon a common wooden chair close by and gazed pitifully at the fire. For my part I stood up and wondered at them both, and wondered also at that in man by which he must attach himself to something, even if it be but a dog, a politician, or an ungrateful child.

When he had gazed at the fire a little while the Recluse began to talk, and I listened to him talking :

'Even if they had not dug up so much earth to prove it I should have known,' said he, 'that the Odyssey was written not at the beginning of a civilization nor in the splendour of it, but towards its close. I do not say this from the evening light that shines across its pages, for that is common to all profound work, but I say it because of the animals, and especially because of

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the dog, who was the only one to know his master when that master came home a beggar to his own land, before his youth was restored to him, and before he got back his women and his kingship by the bending of his bow, and before he hanged the housemaids and killed all those who had despised him.'

'But how,' said I (for I am younger than he), 'can the animals in the poem show you that the poem belongs to a decline?'

'Why,' said he, 'because at the end of a great civilization the air gets empty, the light goes out of the sky, the gods depart, and men in their loneliness put out a groping hand, catching at the friendship of, and trying to understand, whatever lives and suffers as they do. You will find it never fail that where a passionate regard for the animals about us, or even a great tenderness for them, is to be found there is also to be found decay in the State.'

'I hope not,' said I. 'Moreover, it cannot be true, for in the Thirteenth Century, which was certainly the healthiest time we ever had, animals were understood; and I will prove it to you in several carvings.'

He shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, saying, 'In the rough and in general it is true; and the reason is the reason I have given you, that when decay begins, whether of a man or of a State, there comes with it an appalling and a torturing loneliness in which our energies decline into a strong affection for whatever is constantly

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our companion and for whatever is certainly present upon earth. For we have lost the sky.'

'Then if the senses are so powerful in a decline of the State there should come at the same time,' said I, 'a quick forgetfulness of the human dead and an easy change of human friendship?'

'There does,' he answered, and to that there was no more to be said.

'I know it by my own experience,' he continued. 'When, yesterday, at sunset, I looked for my dog Argus and could not find him, I went out into the wood and called him: the darkness came and I found no trace of him. I did not hear him barking far off as I have heard him before when he was younger and went hunting for a while, and three times that night I came back out of the wild into the warmth of my house, making sure he would have returned, but he was never there. The third time I had gone a mile out to the gamekeeper's to give him money if Argus should be found, and I asked him as many questions and as foolish as a woman would ask. Then I sat up right into the night, thinking that every movement of the wind outside or of the drip of water was the little pad of his step coming up the flagstones to the door. I was even in the mood when men see unreal things, and twice I thought I saw him passing quickly between my chair and the passage to the further room. But these things are proper to the night and the strongest thing I suffered for him was in the morning.'

ON A DOG AND A MAN ALSO

'It was, as you know, very bitterly cold for several days. They found things dead in the hedgerows, and there was perhaps no running water between here and the Downs. There was no shelter from the snow. There was no cover for my friend at all. And when I was up at dawn with the faint light about, a driving wind full of sleet filled all the air. Then I made certain that the dog Argus was dead, and what was worse that I should not find his body : that the old dog had got caught in some snare or that his strength had failed him through the cold, as it fails us human beings also upon such nights, striking at the heart.

'Though I was certain that I would not see him again yet I went on foolishly and aimlessly enough, plunging through the snow from one spinney to another and hoping that I might hear a whine. I heard none : and if the little trail he had made in his departure might have been seen in the evening, long before that morning the drift would have covered it.

'I had eaten nothing and yet it was near noon when I returned, pushing forward to the cottage against the pressure of the storm, when I found there, miserably crouched, trembling, half dead, in the lee of a little thick yew beside my door, the dog Argus ; and as I came his tail just wagged and he just moved his ears, but he had not the strength to come near me, his master.

οὐρῇ μὲν ῥ' ὄγ' ἔσηνε καὶ οὐατα κάββαλεν ἄμφω,
ἄσσον δ' οὐκέτ' ἔπειτα δυνήσατο οἷο ἄνακτος
ἐλθέμεν,

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'I carried him in and put him here, feeding him by force, and I have restored him.'

All this the Recluse said to me with as deep and as restrained emotion as though he had been speaking of the most sacred things, as indeed, for him, these things were sacred.

It was therefore a mere inadvertence in me, and an untrained habit of thinking aloud, which made me say :

'Good Heavens, what will you do when the dog Argus dies?'

At once I wished I had not said it, for I could see that the Recluse could not bear the words. I looked therefore a little awkwardly beyond him and was pleased to see the dog Argus lazily opening his one eye and surveying me with torpor and with contempt. He was certainly less moved than his master.

Then in my heart I prayed that of these two (unless The God would make them both immortal and catch them up into whatever place is better than the Weald, or unless he would grant them one death together upon one day) that the dog Argus might survive my friend, and that the Recluse might be the first to dissolve that long companionship. For of this I am certain, that the dog would suffer less ; for men love their dependents much more than do their dependents them ; and this is especially true of brutes ; for men are nearer to the gods.

ON DEATH

I KNEW a man once who made a great case of Death, saying that he esteemed a country according to its regard for the conception of Death, and according to the respect which it paid to that conception. He also said that he considered individuals by much the same standard, but that he did not judge them so strictly in the matter, because (said he) great masses of men are more permanently concerned with great issues ; whereas private citizens are disturbed by little particular things which interfere with their little particular lives, and so distract them from the general end.

This was upon a river called Boutonne, in Vendée, and at the time I did not understand what he meant because as yet I had had no experience of these things. But this man to whom I spoke had had three kinds of experience ; first, he had himself been very probably the occasion of Death in others, for he had been a soldier in a war of conquest where the Europeans were few and the Barbarians many ! secondly, he had been himself very often wounded, and more than once all but killed ; thirdly, he was at the time he told me this thing an old man who must in any case soon come to that experience or catastrophe of which he spoke.

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He was an innkeeper, the father of two daughters, and his inn was by the side of the river, but the road ran between. His face was more anxiously earnest than is commonly the face of a French peasant, as though he had suffered more than do ordinarily that very prosperous, very virile, and very self-governing race of men. He had also about him what many men show who have come sharply against the great realities, that is, a sort of diffidence in talking of ordinary things. I could see that in the matters of his household he allowed himself to be led by women. Meanwhile he continued to talk to me over the table upon this business of Death, and as he talked he showed that desire to persuade which is in itself the strongest motive of interest in any human discourse.

He said to me that those who affected to despise the consideration of Death knew nothing of it; that they had never seen it close and might be compared to men who spoke of battles when they had only read books about battles, or who spoke of sea-sickness though they had never seen the sea. This last metaphor he used with some pride, for he had crossed the Mediterranean from Provence to Africa some five or six times, and had upon each occasion suffered horribly; for, of course, his garrison had been upon the edge of the desert, and he had been a soldier beyond the Atlas. He told me that those who affected to neglect or to despise Death were worse than children talking of grown-up things, and were

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more like prigs talking of physical things of which they knew nothing.

I told him then that there were many such men, especially in the town of Geneva. This, he said, he could well believe, though he had never travelled there, and had hardly heard the name of the place. But he knew it for some foreign town. He told me, also, that there were men about in his own part of the world who pretended that since Death was an accident like any other, and, moreover, one as certain as hunger or as sleep, it was not to be considered. These, he said, were the worst debaters upon his favourite subject.

Now as he talked in this fashion I confess that I was very bored. I had desired to go on to Angoulême upon my bicycle, and I was at that age when all human beings think themselves immortal. I had desired to get off the main high road into the hills upon the left, to the east of it, and I was at an age when the cessation of mundane experience is not a conceivable thing. Moreover, this innkeeper had been pointed out to me as a man who could give very useful information upon the nature of the roads I had to travel, and it had never occurred to me that he would switch me off after dinner upon a hobby of his own. Today, after a wider travel, I know well that all innkeepers have hobbies, and that an abstract or mystical hobby of this sort is amongst the best with which to pass an evening. But no matter, I am talking of then and not now. He

kept me, therefore, uninterested as I was, and continued :

'People who put Death away from them, who do not neglect or despise it but who stop thinking about it, annoy me very much. We have in this village a chemist of such a kind. He will have it that, five minutes afterwards, a man thinks no more about it.' Having gone so far, the innkeeper, clenching his hands and fixing me with a brilliant glance from his old eyes, said :

'With such men I will have nothing to do !'

Indeed, that his chief subject should be treated in such a fashion was odious to him, and rightly, for of the half-dozen things worth strict consideration, there is no doubt that his hobby was the chief, and to have one's hobby vulgarly despised is intolerable.

The innkeeper then went on to tell me that so far as he could make out it was a man's business to consider this subject of Death continually, to wonder upon it, and, if he could, to extract its meaning. Of the men I had met so far in life, only the Scotch and certain of the Western French went on in this metaphysical manner : thus a Breton, a Basque, and a man in Ecclefechan (I hope I spell it right) and another in Jedburgh had already each of them sent me to my bed confused upon the matter of free will. So this Western innkeeper refused to leave his thesis. It was incredible to him that a Sentient Being who perpetually accumulated experience, who grew riper and riper, more and more full of such knowledge as

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was native to himself and complementary to his nature, should at the very crisis of his success in all things intellectual and emotional, cease suddenly. It was further an object to him of vast curiosity why such a being, since a future was essential to it, should find that future veiled.

He presented to me a picture of men perpetually passing through a field of vision out of the dark and into the dark. He showed me these men, not growing and falling as fruits do (so the modern vulgar conception goes) but alive throughout their transit : pouring like an unbroken river from one sharp limit of the horizon whence they entered into life to that other sharp limit where they poured out from life, not through decay, but through a sudden catastrophe.

'I,' said he, 'shall die, I do suppose, with a full consciousness of my being and with a great fear in my eyes. And though many die decrepit and senile, that is not the normal death of men, for men have in them something of a self-creative power, which pushes them on to the further realization of themselves, right up to the edge of their doom.'

I put his words in English after a great many years, but they were something of this kind, for he was a metaphysical sort of man.

It was now near midnight, and I could bear with such discussions no longer ; my fatigue was great and the hour at which I had to rise next day was early. It was, therefore, in but a drowsy state that I heard him continue his discourse. He

told me a long story of how he had seen one day a company of young men of the New Army, the conscripts, go marching past his house along the river through a driving snow. He said that first he heard them singing long before he saw them, that then they came out like ghosts for a moment through the drift, that then in the half light of the winter dawn they clearly appeared, all in step for once, swinging forward, muffled in their dark blue coats, and still singing to the lift of their feet ; that then on their way to the seaport, they passed again into the blinding scurry of the snow, that they seemed like ghosts again for a moment behind the veil of it, and that long after they had disappeared their singing could still be heard.

By this time I was most confused as to what lesson he would convey, and sleep had nearly overcome me, but I remember his telling me that such a sight stood to him at the moment and did still stand for the passage of the French Armies perpetually on into the dark, century after century, destroyed for the most part upon fields of battle. He told me that he felt like one who had seen the retreat from Moscow, and he would, I am sure, had I not determined to leave him and to take at least some little sleep, have asked me what fate there was for those single private soldiers, each real, each existent, while the army which they made up and of whose 'destruction' men spoke, was but a number, a notion, a name. He would have pestered me, if my mind had still been active, as to what their secret destinies were

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who lay, each man alone, twisted round the guns after the failure to hold the Bridge of the Beresina. He might have gone deeper, but I was too tired to listen to him any more.

This human debate of ours (and very one-sided it was !) is now resolved, for in the interval since it was engaged the innkeeper himself has died.

REALITY

A COUPLE of generations ago there was a sort of man going mournfully about who complained of the spread of education. He had an ill-ease in his mind. He feared that book learning would bring us no good, and he was called a fool for his pains. Not undeservedly---for his thoughts were muddled, and if his heart was good it was far better than his head. He argued badly or he merely affirmed, but he had strong allies (Ruskin was one of them), and, like every man who is sincere, there was something in what he said ; like every type which is numerous, there was a human feeling behind him : and he was very numerous.

Now that he is pretty well extinct we are beginning to understand what he meant and what there was to be said for him. The greatest of the French Revolutionists was right---'After bread, the most crying need of the populace is knowledge.' But what knowledge?

The truth is that secondary impressions, impressions gathered from books and from maps, are valuable as adjuncts to primary impressions (that is, impressions gathered through the channel of our senses), or, what is always almost as good and sometimes better, the interpreting voice of the

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living man. For you must allow me the paradox that in some mysterious way the voice and gesture of a living witness always convey something of the real impression he has had, and sometimes convey more than we should have received ourselves from our own sight and hearing of the thing related.

Well, I say, these secondary impressions are valuable as adjuncts to primary impressions. But when they stand absolute and have hardly any reference to primary impressions, then they may deceive. When they stand not only absolute but clothed with authority, and when they pretend to convince us even against our own experience, they are positively undoing the work which education was meant to do. When we receive them merely as an enlargement of what we know, and make of the unseen things of which we read things in the image of the seen, then they quite distort our appreciation of the world.

Consider so simple a thing as a river. A child learns its map and knows, or thinks it knows, that such and such rivers characterize such and such nations and their territories. Paris stands upon the river Seine, Rome upon the river Tiber, New Orleans on the Mississippi, Toledo upon the river Tagus, and so forth. That child will know one river, the river near his home. And he will think of all those other rivers in its image. He will think of the Tagus and the Tiber and the Seine and the Mississippi—and they will all be the river near his home. Then let him travel, and what will he come across? The Seine, if he is from these

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islands, may not disappoint him or astonish him with a sense of novelty and of ignorance. It will indeed look grander and more majestic, seen from the enormous forest heights above its lower course, than what, perhaps, he had thought possible in a river, but still it will be a river of water out of which a man can drink, with clear-cut banks and with bridges over it, and with boats that ply up and down. But let him see the Tagus at Toledo, and what he finds is brown rolling mud, pouring solid after the rains, or sluggish and hardly a river after long drought. Let him go down the Tiber, down the valley of the Tiber, on foot, and he will retain until the last miles an impression of nothing but a turbid mountain torrent, mixed with the friable soil in its bed. Let him approach the Mississippi in the most part of its long course, and the novelty will be more striking still. It will not seem to him a river at all (if he be from Northern Europe); it will seem a chance flood. He will come to it through marshes and through swamps, crossing a deserted backwater, finding firm land beyond, then coming to further shallow patches of wet, out of which the tree-stumps stand, and beyond which again mud-heaps and banks and groups of reeds leave undetermined, for one hundred yards after another, the limits of the vast stream. At last, if he has a boat with him, he may make some place where he has a clear view right across to low trees, tiny from their distance, similarly half swamped upon a further shore, and behind them a low escarpment

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of bare earth. That is the Mississippi nine times out of ten, and to an Englishman who had expected to find from his early reading or his maps a larger Thames it seems for all the world like a stretch of East Anglian flood, save that it is so much more desolate.

The maps are coloured to express the claims of Governments. What do they tell you of the social truth? Go on foot or bicycling through the more populated upland belt of Algiers and discover the curious mixture of security and war which no map can tell you of and which none of the geographies make you understand. The excellent roads, trodden by men that cannot make a road ; the walls as ready loopholed for fighting ; the Christian Church and the mosque in one town ; the necessity for and the hatred of the European ; the indescribable difference of the sun, which here, even in winter, has something malignant about it, and strikes as well as warms ; the mountains odd, unlike our mountains ; the forests, which stand as it were by hardihood, and seem at war against the influence of dryness and the desert winds, with their trees far apart, and between them no grass, but bare earth alone.

So it is with the reality of arms and with the reality of the sea. Too much reading of battles has ever unfitted men for war ; too much talk of the sea is a poison in these great town populations of ours which know nothing of the sea. Who that knows anything of the sea will claim certitude in connexion with it? And yet there is a school

which has by this time turned its mechanical system almost into a commonplace upon our lips, and talks of that most perilous thing, the fortunes of a fleet, as though it were a merely numerical and calculable thing! The greatest of Armadas may set out and not return.

There is one experience of travel and of the physical realities of the world which has been so widely repeated, and which men have so constantly verified, that I could mention it as a last example of my thesis without fear of misunderstanding. I mean the quality of a great mountain.

To one that has never seen a mountain it may seem a full and a fine piece of knowledge to be acquainted with its height in feet exactly, its situation; nay, many would think themselves learned if they know no more than its conventional name. But the thing itself! The curious sense of its isolation from the common world, of its being the habitation of awe, perhaps the brooding-place of a god!

I had seen many mountains, I had travelled in many places, and I had read many particular details in the books—and so well noted them upon the maps that I could have re-drawn the maps—concerning the Cerdagne. None the less the sight of that wall of the Cerdagne, when first it struck me, coming down the pass from Tourcarol, was as novel as though all my life had been spent upon empty plains. By the map it was 9,000 feet. It might have been 90,000! The wonderment as to what lay beyond, the sense that it was

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a limit to known things, its savage intangibility, its sheer silence. Nothing but the eye seeing could give one all those things.

The old complain that the young will not take advice. But the wisest will tell them that, save blindly and upon authority, the young cannot take it. For most of human and social experience is words to the young, and the reality can come only with years. The wise complain of the jingo in every country; and properly, for he upsets the plans of statesmen, miscalculates the value of national forces, and may, if he is powerful enough, destroy the true spirit of armies. But the wise would be wiser still if, while they blamed the extravagance of this sort of man, they would recognize that it came from that half-knowledge of mere names and lists which excludes reality. It is maps and newspapers that turn an honest fool into a jingo.

It is so again with distance, and it is so with time. Men will not grasp distance unless they have traversed it, or unless it be represented to them vividly by the comparison of great landscapes. Men will not grasp historical time unless the historian shall be at the pains to give them what historians so rarely give, the measure of a period in terms of a human life. It is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that a contempt for the past arises, and that the fatal illusion of some gradual process of betterment of 'progress' vulgarizes the minds of men and wastes their effort. It is from secondary impressions divorced from

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reality that a society imagines itself diseased when it is healthy, or healthy when it is diseased. And it is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that springs the amazing power of the little second-rate public man in those modern machines that think themselves democracies. This last is a power which, luckily, cannot be greatly abused, for the men upon whom it is thrust are not capable even of abuse upon a great scale. It is none the less marvellous in its falsehood.

Now you will say at the end of this, Since you blame so much the power for distortion and for ill residing in our great towns, in our system of primary education and in our papers and in our books, what remedy can you propose? Why, none, either immediate or mechanical. The best and the greatest remedy is a true philosophy, which shall lead men always to ask themselves what they really know and in what order of certitude they know it; where authority actually resides and where it is usurped. But, apart from the advent, or rather the recapture, of a true philosophy by a European society, two forces are at work which will always bring reality back, though less swiftly and less whole. The first is the poet, and the second is Time.

Sooner or later Time brings the empty phrase and the false conclusion up against what is; the empty imaginary looks reality in the face and the truth at once conquers. In war a nation learns whether it is strong or no, and how it is strong and how weak; it learns it as well in defeat as in

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victory. In the long processes of human lives, in the succession of generations, the real necessities and nature of a human society destroy any false formula upon which it was attempted to conduct it. Time must always ultimately teach.

The poet, in some way it is difficult to understand (unless we admit that he is a seer), is also very powerful as the ally of such an influence. He brings out the inner part of things and presents them to men in such a way that they cannot refuse but must accept it. But how the mere choice and rhythm of words should produce so magical an effect no one has yet been able to comprehend, and least of all the poets themselves.

OUR INHERITANCE

How noble is our inheritance. The more one thinks of it the more suffused with pleasure one's mind becomes ; for the inheritance of a man living in this country is not one of this sort or of that sort, but of all sorts. It is, indeed, a necessary condition for the enjoyment of that inheritance that a man should be free, and we have really so muddled things that very many men in England are not free, for they have either to suffer a gross denial of mere opportunity---I mean they cannot even leave their town for any distance---or they are so persecuted by the insecurity of their lives that they have no room for looking at the world, but if an Englishman is free what an inheritance he has to enjoy !

It is the fashion of great nations to insist upon some part of their inheritance, their military memories, or their letters, or their religion, or some other thing. But in modern Europe, as it seems to me, three or four of the great nations can play upon many such titles to joy as upon an instrument. For a man in Italy, or England, or France, or Spain, if he is weary of the manifold literature of his own country can turn to its endurance under arms (in which respect, by the way, victory and defeat are of little account), or if he is weary of these military things, or thinks the too continued contemplation of them hurtful to the State (as it

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often is, for it goes to the head like wine), he can consider the great minds which his nation has produced, and which give glory to his nation not so much because they are great as because they are national. Then, again, he can consider the landscapes of his own land, whether peaceably, as do older men, or in a riot of enthusiasm as do all younger men who see England in the midst of exercising their bodies, as it says in the Song of the Man who Bicycled :

. . . . and her distance and her sea.
Here is wealth that has no measure,
All wide England is my treasure,
Park and Close and private pleasure :
All her hills were made for me.

Then he can poke about the cities, and any one of them might occupy him almost for a lifetime. Hereford, for instance. I know of nothing in Europe like the Norman work of Hereford or Ludlow, where you will perpetually find new things, or Leominster just below, or Ledbury just below that again ; and the inn at each of these three places is called The Feathers.

Then a man may be pleased to consider the recorded history of this country, and to inform the fields he knows with the past and with the actions of men long dead. In this way he can use a battlefield with no danger of any detestable insolence or vulgar civilian ways, for the interest in a battlefield, if it is closely studied, becomes so keen and hot that it burns away all foolish violence, and you will soon find if you study this sort of

terrain closely that you forget on which side your sympathies fail or succeed : an excellent corrective if, as it should be with healthy men, your sympathies too often warp evidence and blind you. On this account also one should always suspect the accuracy of military history when it betrays sneering or crowing, because, in the first place, that is a very unmilitary way of looking at battles, and, in the second place, it argues that the historian has not properly gone into all his details. If he had he would have been much too interested in such questions as the measurement of ranges, or, latterly, the presence and nature of cover to bother about crowing or sneering.

When a man tires of these there is left to him the music of his country, by which I mean the tunes. These he can sing to himself as he goes along, and if ever he tires of that there is the victuals and the drink, which, if he has travelled, he may compare to their advantage over those of any other land. But they must be national. Let him take no pleasure in things cooked in a foreign way. There was a man some time ago, in attempting to discover whose name I have spent too much energy, who wrote a most admirable essay upon cold beef and pickles, remarking that these two elements of English life are retreating as it were into the strongholds where England is still holding out against the dirty cosmopolitan mud which threatens every country today. He traced the retreat of cold beef and pickles eastward towards the City from the West End all along Piccadilly and the Strand

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right into Fleet-street, where, he said, they were keeping their positions manfully. They stand also isolated and besieged in one hundred happy English country towns. . . .

The trouble about writing an article like this is that one wanders about : it is also the pleasure of it. The limits or trammels to an article like this are that, by a recent and very dangerous superstition, the printed truth is punishable at law, and all one's memories of a thousand places upon the Icknield Way, the Stane Street, the Pilgrim's Way, the Rivers Ouse (all three of them), the Cornish Road, the Black Mountain, Ferry Side, the Three Rivers, all the Pennines, all the Cheviots, all the Cotswolds, all the Mendips, all the Chilterns, all the Malvern Hills, and all the Downs—to speak of but a few—must be memories of praise—by order of the Court. One may not blame : therefore I say nothing of Northwich.

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Some men say that whereas wealth can be accumulated and left to others when we die, this sort of inheritance can not, and that the great pleasure a man took in his own land and the very many ways in which he found that pleasure and his increase in that pleasure as his life proceeded, all die with him. This you will very often hear deplored. As noble a woman as ever lived in London used to say, speaking of her father (and she also is dead), that all she valued in him died with him, although he had left her a considerable

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fortune. By which she meant that not only in losing him she had lost a rooted human affection and had suffered what all must suffer, because there is a doom upon us, but that those particular things in which he was particularly favoured had gone away for ever. His power over other languages and over his own language, his vast knowledge of his own country, his acquired courtesy and humour, all mellowed by the world and time, these, she said, were altogether gone. And to us of a younger generation it was her work to lament that we should never know what had once been in England. Among others she vastly admired the first Duke of Wellington, and said that he was tall—which was absurd. Now this noble woman, it seems to me, was in error, for all of us who have loved and enjoyed know not only that we carry something with us elsewhere (as we are bound to believe), but leave also in some manner which I do not clearly perceive a legacy to our own people. We take with us that of which Peter Wanderwide spoke when he said or rather sang these lines—

If all that I have loved and seen
Be with me on the Judgement Day,
I shall be saved the crowd between
From Satan and his foul array.

We carry it with us. And though it is not a virtue it is half a virtue, and when we go down in the grave like the character in *Everyman*, there will go down with us, I think, not only Good Deeds, a severe female, but also a merry little hobbling

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comrade who winks and grins and keeps just behind her so that he shall not be noticed and driven away. This little fellow will also speak for us, I think, and he is the Pleasure we took in this jolly world.

But I say that not only do we carry something with us, but that we leave something also ; and this has been best put, I think, by the poet Ronsard when he was dying, who said, if I have rightly translated him, this—

‘Of all those vanities’ (he is speaking of the things of this world), ‘the loveliest and most praiseworthy is glory—fame. No one of my time has been so filled with it as I ; I have lived in it and loved and triumphed in it through time past, and now I leave it to my country to garner and possess it after I shall die. So do I go away from my own place as satiated with the glory of this world as I am hungry and all longing for that of God.’

That is very good. It would be very difficult to put it better, and if you complain that here Ronsard was only talking of fame or glory, why, I can tell you that the pleasure one takes in one’s country is of the same stuff as fame. So true is this that the two commonly go together, and that those become most glorious who have most enjoyed their own land.

WOMAN

A CORRESPONDENT has written me an able and interesting letter in the matter of some allusions of mine to the subject of communal kitchens. He defends communal kitchens very lucidly from the standpoint of the calculating collectivist ; but, like many of his school, he cannot apparently grasp that there is another test of the whole matter, with which such calculation has nothing at all to do. He knows it would be cheaper if a number of us ate at the same time, so as to use the same table. So it would. It would also be cheaper if a number of us slept at different times, so as to use the same pair of trousers. But the question is not how cheap are we buying a thing, but what are we buying? It is cheap to own a slave. And it is cheaper still to be a slave.

My correspondent also says that the habit of dining out in restaurants, etc., is growing. So, I believe, is the habit of committing suicide. I do not desire to connect the two facts together. It seems fairly clear that a man could not dine at a restaurant because he had just committed suicide ; and it would be extreme, perhaps, to suggest that he commits suicide because he has just dined at a restaurant. But the two cases, when put side by side, are enough to indicate the falcity and poltroonery of this eternal modern



G. K. CHESTERTON

WOMAN

argument from what is in fashion. The question for brave men is not whether a certain thing is increasing; the question is whether we are increasing it. I dine very often in restaurants because the nature of my trade makes it convenient: but if I thought that by dining in restaurants I was working for the creation of communal meals, I would never enter a restaurant again; I would carry bread and cheese in my pocket or eat chocolate out of automatic machines. For the personal element in some things is sacred. I heard Mr. Will Crooks put it perfectly the other day: 'The most sacred thing is to be able to shut your own door.'

My correspondent says, 'Would not our women be spared the drudgery of cooking and all its attendant worries, leaving them free for higher culture?' The first thing that occurs to me to say about this is very simple, and is, I imagine, a part of all our experience. If my correspondent can find any way of preventing women from worrying, he will indeed be a remarkable man. I think the matter is a much deeper one. First of all, my correspondent overlooks a distinction which is elementary in our human nature. Theoretically, I suppose, every one would like to be freed from worries. But nobody in the world would always like to be freed from worrying occupations. I should very much like (as far as my feelings at the moment go) to be free from the consuming nuisance of writing this article. But it does not follow that I should like to be free from the

consuming nuisance of being a journalist. Because we are worried about a thing, it does not follow that we are not interested in it. The truth is the other way. If we are not interested, why on earth should we be worried? Women are worried about housekeeping, but those that are most interested are the most worried. Women are still more worried about their husbands and their children. And I suppose if we strangled the children and poleaxed the husbands it would leave women free for higher culture. That is, it would leave them free to begin to worry about that. For women would worry about higher culture as much as they worry about everything else.

I believe this way of talking about women and their higher culture is almost entirely a growth of the classes which (unlike the journalistic class to which I belong) have always a reasonable amount of money. One odd thing I specially notice. Those who write like this seem entirely to forget the existence of the working and wage-earning classes. They say eternally, like my correspondent, that the ordinary woman is always a drudge. And what, in the name of the Nine Gods, is the ordinary man? These people seem to think that the ordinary man is a Cabinet Minister. They are always talking about man going forth to wield power, to carve his own way, to stamp his individuality on the world, to command and to be obeyed. This may be true of a certain class. Dukes, perhaps, are not drudges; but, then, neither are Duchesses. The Ladies and Gentle-

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men of the Smart Set are quite free for the higher culture, which consists chiefly of motoring and Bridge. But the ordinary man who typifies and constitutes the millions that make up our civilization is no more free for the higher culture than his wife is.

Indeed, he is not so free. Of the two sexes the woman is in the more powerful position. For the average woman is at the head of something with which she can do as she likes ; the average man has to obey orders and do nothing else. He has to put one dull brick on another dull brick, and do nothing else ; he has to add one dull figure to another dull figure, and do nothing else. The woman's world is a small one, perhaps, but she can alter it. The woman can tell the tradesman with whom she deals some realistic things about himself. The clerk who does this to the manager generally gets the sack, or shall we say (to avoid the vulgarism), finds himself free for higher culture. Above all, as I said in my previous article, the woman does work which is in some small degree creative and individual. She can put the flowers or the furniture in fancy arrangements of her own. I fear the bricklayer cannot put the bricks in fancy arrangements of his own, without disaster to himself and others. If the woman is only putting a patch into a carpet, she can choose the thing with regard to colour. I fear it would not do for the office boy dispatching a parcel to choose his stamps with a view to colour ; to prefer the tender mauve of the sixpenny to the crude scarlet of the

penny stamp. A woman cooking may not always cook artistically; still she can cook artistically. She can introduce a personal and imperceptible alteration into the composition of a soup. The clerk is not encouraged to introduce a personal and imperceptible alteration into the figures in a ledger.

The trouble is that the real question I raised is not discussed. It is argued as a problem in pennies, not as a problem in people. It is not the proposals of these reformers that I feel to be false so much as their temper and their arguments. I am not nearly so certain that communal kitchens are wrong as I am that the defenders of communal kitchens are wrong. Of course, for one thing, there is a vast difference between the communal kitchens of which I spoke and the communal meal (*monstrum horrendum, informe*) which the darker and wilder mind of my correspondent diabolically calls up. But in both the trouble is that their defenders will not defend them humanly as human institutions. They will not interest themselves in the staring psychological fact that there are some things that a man or a woman, as the case may be, wishes to do for himself or herself. He or she must do it inventively, creatively, artistically, individually—in a word, badly. Choosing your wife (say) is one of these things. Is choosing your husband's dinner one of these things? That is the whole question: it is never asked.

And then the higher culture. I know that

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culture. I would not set any man free for it if I could help it. The effect of it on the rich men who are free for it is so horrible that it is worse than any of the other amusements of the millionaire—worse than gambling, worse even than philanthropy. It means thinking the smallest poet in Belgium greater than the greatest poet of England. It means losing every democratic sympathy. It means being unable to talk to a navvy about sport, or about beer, or about the Bible, or about the Derby, or about patriotism, or about anything whatever that he, the navvy, wants to talk about. It means taking literature seriously, a very amateurish thing to do. It means pardoning indecency only when it is gloomy indecency. Its disciples will call a spade a spade ; but only when it is a grave-digger's spade. The higher culture is sad, cheap, impudent, unkind, without honesty and without ease. In short, it is 'high'. That abominable word (also applied to game) admirably describes it.

No ; if you were setting women free for something else, I might be more melted. If you can assure me, privately and gravely, that you are setting women free to dance on the mountains like Mænads, or to worship some monstrous goddess, I will make a note of your request. If you are quite sure that the ladies in Brixton, the moment they give up cooking, will beat great gongs and blow horns to Mumbo-Jumbo, then I will agree that the occupation is at least human and is more or less entertaining. Women have

been set free to be Bacchantes ; they have been set free to be Virgin Martyrs ; they have been set free to be Witches. Do not ask them now to sink so low as the higher culture.

I have my own little notions of the possible emancipation of women ; but I suppose I should not be taken very seriously if I propounded them. I should favour anything that would increase the present enormous authority of women and their creative action in their own homes. The average woman, as I have said, is a despot ; the average man is a serf. I am for any scheme that any one can suggest that will make the average woman more of a despot. So far from wishing her to get her cooked meals from outside, I should like her to cook more wilkly and at her own will than she does. So far from getting always the same meals from the same place, let her invent, if she likes, a new dish every day of her life. Let woman be more of a maker, not less. We are right to talk about 'Woman' : only blackguards talk about women. Yet all men talk about men, and that is the whole difference. Men represent the deliberative and democratic element in life. Woman represents the despotic.

THE WORSHIP OF THE WEALTHY

THERE has crept, I notice, into our literature and journalism a new way of flattering the wealthy and the great. In more straightforward times flattery itself was more straightforward; falsehood itself was more true. A poor man wishing to please a rich man simply said that he was the wisest, bravest, tallest, strongest, most benevolent and most beautiful of mankind; and as even the rich man probably knew that he wasn't that, the thing did the less harm. When courtiers sang the praises of a King they attributed to him things that were entirely improbable, as that he resembled the sun at noonday, that they had to shade their eyes when he entered the room, that his people could not breathe without him, or that he had with his single sword conquered Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. The safety of this method was its artificiality; between the King and his public image there was really no relation. But the moderns have invented a much subtler and more poisonous kind of eulogy. The modern method is to take the prince or rich man, to give a credible picture of his type of personality, as that he is business-like, or a sportsman, or fond of art, or convivial, or reserved; and then enormously exaggerate the value and importance of these natural qualities.

Those who praise Mr. Carnegie do not say that he is as wise as Solomon and as brave as Mars; I wish they did. It would be the next most honest thing to giving their real reason for praising him, which is simply that he has money. The journalists who write about Mr. Pierpont Morgan do not say that he is as beautiful as Apollo; I wish they did. What they do is to take the rich man's superficial life and manner, clothes, hobbies, love of cats, dislike of doctors, or what not; and then with the assistance of this realism make the man out to be a prophet and a saviour of his kind, whereas he is merely a private and stupid man who happens to like cats or to dislike doctors. The old flatterer took for granted that the King was an ordinary man, and set to work to make him out extraordinary. The newer and cleverer flatterer takes for granted that he is extraordinary, and that therefore even ordinary things about him will be of interest.

I have noticed one very amusing way in which this is done. I notice the method applied to about six of the wealthiest men in England in a book of interviews published by an able and well-known journalist. The flatterer contrives to combine strict truth of fact with a vast atmosphere of awe and mystery by the simple operation of dealing almost entirely in negatives. Suppose you are writing a sympathetic study of Mr. Pierpont Morgan. Perhaps there is not much to say about what he does think, or like, or admire; but you can suggest whole vistas of his taste and philo-

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sophy by talking a great deal about what he does not think, or like, or admire. You say of him—"But little attracted to the most recent schools of German philosophy, he stands almost as resolutely aloof from the tendencies of transcendental Pantheism as from the narrower ecstasies of Neo-Catholicism.' Or suppose I am called upon to praise the charwoman who has just come into my house, and who certainly deserves it much more. I say—"It would be a mistake to class Mrs. Higgs among the followers of Loisy; her position is in many ways different; nor is she wholly to be identified with the concrete Hebraism of Harnack.' It is a splendid method, as it gives the flatterer an opportunity of talking about something else besides the subject of the flattery, and it gives the subject of the flattery a rich, if somewhat bewildered, mental glow, as of one who has somehow gone through agonies of philosophical choice of which he was previously unaware. It is a splendid method; but I wish it were applied sometimes to charwomen rather than only to millionaires.

There is another way of flattering important people which has become very common, I notice, among writers in the newspapers and elsewhere. It consists in applying to them the phrases "simple," or "quiet," or "modest," without any sort of meaning or relation to the person to whom they are applied. To be simple is the best thing in the world; to be modest is the next best thing. I am not so sure about being quiet. I am rather inclined to think that really modest people make

a great deal of noise. It is quite self-evident that really simple people make a great deal of noise. But simplicity and modesty, at least, are very rare and royal human virtues, not to be lightly talked about. Few human beings, and at rare intervals, have really risen into being modest; not one man in ten or in twenty has by long wars become simple, as an actual old soldier does by long wars become simple. These virtues are not things to fling about as mere flattery; many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things and have not seen them. But in the description of the births, lives, and deaths of very luxurious men they are used incessantly and quite without thought. If a journalist has to describe a great politician or financier (the things are substantially the same) entering a room or walking down a thoroughfare, he always says, 'Mr. Midas was quietly dressed in a black frock-coat, a white waistcoat, and light grey trousers, with a plain green tie and simple flower in his button-hole.' As if any one would expect him to have a crimson frock coat or spangled trousers. As if any one would expect him to have a burning Catherine-wheel in his button-hole.

But this process, which is absurd enough when applied to the ordinary and external lives of worldly people, becomes perfectly intolerable when it is applied, as it always is applied, to the one episode which is serious even in the lives of politicians. I mean their death. When we have been sufficiently bored with the account of the simple cos-

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tume of the millionaire, which is generally about as complicated as any that he could assume without being simply thought mad ; when we have been told about the modest home of the millionaire, a home which is generally much too immodest to be called a home at all ; when we have followed him through all these unmeaning eulogies, we are always asked last of all to admire his quiet funeral. I do not know what else people think a funeral should be except quiet. Yet again and again, over the grave of every one of those sad rich men, for whom one should surely feel, first and last, a speechless pity—over the grave of Beit, over the grave of Whiteley—this sickening nonsense about modesty and simplicity has been poured out. I well remember that when Beit was buried, the papers said that the mourning-coaches contained everybody of importance, that the floral tributes were sumptuous, splendid, intoxicating ; but, for all that, it was a simple and quiet funeral. What, in the name of Acheron, did they expect it to be ? Did they think there would be human sacrifice—the immolation of Oriental slaves upon the tomb ? Did they think that long rows of Oriental dancing-girls would sway hither and thither in an ecstasy of lament ? Did they look for the funeral games of Patroclus ? I fear they had no such splendid and pagan meaning. I fear they were only using the words ‘quiet’ and ‘modest’ as words to fill up a page—a mere piece of the automatic hypocrisy which does become too common among those who have to write rapidly and often. The word

'modest' will soon become like the word 'honourable', which is said to be employed by the Japanese before any word that occurs in a polite sentence, as 'Put honourable umbrella in honourable umbrella-stand' ; or 'condescend to clean honourable boots'. We shall read in the future that the modest King went out in his modest crown, clad from head to foot in modest gold and attended with his ten thousand modest earls, their swords modestly drawn. No ! if we have to pay for splendour let us praise it as splendour, not as simplicity. When next I meet a rich man I intend to walk up to him in the street and address him with Oriental hyperbole. He will probably run away.

TOLSTOY AND THE CULT OF SIMPLICITY

THE whole world is certainly heading for a great simplicity, not deliberately, but rather inevitably. It is not a mere fashion of false innocence, like that of the French aristocrats before the Revolution, who built an altar to Pan, and who taxed the peasantry for the enormous expenditure which is needed in order to live the simple life of peasants. The simplicity towards which the world is driving is the necessary outcome of all our systems and speculations and of our deep and continuous contemplation of things. For the universe is like everything in it : we have to look at it repeatedly and habitually before we see it. It is only when we have seen it for the hundredth time that we see it for the first time. The more consistently things are contemplated, the more they tend to unify themselves and therefore to simplify themselves. The simplification of anything is always sensational. Thus monotheism is the most sensational of things : it is as if we gazed long at a design full of disconnected objects, and, suddenly, with a stunning thrill, they came together into a huge and staring face.

Few people will dispute that all the typical

movements of our time are upon this road towards simplification. Each system seeks to be more fundamental than the other; each seeks, in the literal sense, to undermine the other. In art, for example, the old conception of man, classic as the Apollo Belvedere, has first been attacked by the realist, who asserts that man, as a fact of natural history, is a creature with colourless hair and a freckled face. Then comes the Impressionist, going yet deeper, who asserts that to his physical eye, which alone is certain, man is a creature with purple hair and a grey face. Then comes the Symbolist, and says that to his soul, which alone is certain, man is a creature with green hair and a blue face. And all the great writers of our time represent in one form or another this attempt to re-establish communication with the elemental, or, as it is sometimes more roughly and fallaciously expressed, to return to nature. Some think that the return to nature consists in drinking no wine; some think that it consists in drinking a great deal more than is good for them. Some think that the return to nature is achieved by beating swords into ploughshares; some think it is achieved by turning ploughshares into very ineffectual British War Office bayonets. It is natural, according to the Jingo, for a man to kill other people with gunpowder and himself with gin. It is natural, according to the humanitarian revolutionist, to fill other people with dynamite and himself with vegetarianism. It would be too obviously Philistine a sentiment, perhaps, to suggest that the claim of

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either of these persons to be obeying the voice of nature is interesting when we consider that they require huge volumes of paradoxical argument to persuade themselves or anyone else of the truth of their conclusions. But the giants of our time are undoubtedly alike in that they approach by very different roads this conception of the return to simplicity. Ibsen returns to nature by the angular exterior of fact, Maeterlinck by the eternal tendencies of fable. Whitman returns to nature by seeing how much he can accept, Tolstoy by seeing how much he can reject.

Now, this heroic desire to return to nature is, of course, in some respects, rather like the heroic desire of a kitten to return to its own tail. A tail is a simple and beautiful object, rhythmic in curve and soothing in texture; but it is certainly one of the minor but characteristic qualities of a tail that it should hang behind. It is impossible to deny that it would in some degree lose its character if attached to any other part of the anatomy. Now, nature is like a tail in the sense that it is vitally important if it is to discharge its real duty that it should be always behind. To image that we can see nature, especially our own nature face to face is a folly; it is even a blasphemy. It is like the conduct of a cat in some mad fairy-tale, who should set out on his travels with the firm conviction that he would find his tail growing like a tree in the meadows at the end of the world. And the actual effect of the travels of the philosopher in search of nature when seen

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from the outside looks very like the gyrations of the tail-pursuing kitten, exhibiting much enthusiasm but little dignity, much cry and very little tail. The grandeur of nature is that she is omnipotent and unseen, that she is perhaps ruling us most when we think that she is heeding us least. 'Thou art a God that hidest Thyself,' said the Hebrew poet. It may be said with all reverence that it is behind a man's back that the spirit of nature hides.

It is this consideration that lends a certain air of futility even to all the inspired simplicities and thunderous veracities of Tolstoy. We feel that a man cannot make himself simple merely by warring on complexity; we feel, indeed, in our saner moments that a man cannot make himself simple at all. A self-conscious simplicity may well be far more intrinsically ornate than luxury itself. Indeed, a great deal of the pomp and sumptuousness of the world's history was simple in the truest sense. It was born of an almost babyish receptiveness; it was the work of men who had eyes to wonder and men who had ears to hear.

King Solomon brought merchant men,
Because of his desire,
With peacocks, apes and ivory,
From Tarshish unto Tyre.

But this proceeding was not a part of the wisdom of Solomon; it was a part of his folly—I had almost said of his innocence. Tolstoy, we feel,

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would not be content with hurling satire and denunciation at 'Solomon in all his glory'. With fierce and unimpeachable logic he would go a step further. He would spend days and nights in the meadows stripping the shameless crimson coronals off the lilies of the field.

The new collection of *Tales from Tolstoy*, translated and edited by Mr. R. Nisbet Bain, is calculated to draw particular attention to this ethical and ascetic side of Tolstoy's work. In one sense, and that the deepest sense, the work of Tolstoy is, of course, a genuine and noble appeal to simplicity. The narrow notion that an artist may not teach is pretty well exploded by now. But the truth of the matter is, that an artist teaches far more by his mere background and properties, his landscape, his costume, his idiom and technique—all the part of his work, in short, of which he is probably entirely unconscious, than by the elaborate and pompous moral dicta which he fondly imagines to be his opinions. The real distinction between the ethics of high art and the ethics of manufactured and didactic art lies in the simple fact that the bad fable has a moral, while the good fable is a moral. And the real moral of Tolstoy comes out constantly in these stories, the great moral which lies at the heart of all his work, of which he is probably unconscious, and of which it is quite likely that he would vehemently disapprove. The curious cold white light of morning that shines over all the tales, the folklore simplicity with which 'a man or a woman' are

spoken of without further identification, the love—one might almost say the lust—for the qualities of brute materials, the hardness of wood, and the softness of mud, the ingrained belief in a certain ancient kindness sitting beside the very cradle of the race of man—these influences are truly moral. When we put beside them the trumpeting and tearing nonsense of the didactic Tolstoy, screaming for an obscene purity, shouting for an inhuman peace, hacking up human life into small sins with a chopper, sneering at men, women, and children out of respect to humanity, combining in one chaos of contradictions an unmanly Puritan and an uncivilized prig, then, indeed, we scarcely know whither Tolstoy has vanished. We know not what to do with this small and noisy moralist who is inhabiting one corner of a great and good man.

It is difficult in every case to reconcile Tolstoy the great artist with Tolstoy the almost venomous reformer. It is difficult to believe that a man who draws in such noble outlines the dignity of the daily life of humanity regards as evil that divine act of procreation by which that dignity is renewed from age to age. It is difficult to believe that a man who has painted with so frightful an honesty the heartrending emptiness of the life of the poor can really grudge them every one of their pitiful pleasures, from courtship to tobacco. It is difficult to believe that a poet in prose who has so powerfully exhibited the earth-born air of man, the essential kinship of a human being, with the

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landscape in which he lives, can deny so elemental a virtue as that which attaches a man to his own ancestors and his own land. It is difficult to believe that the man who feels so poignantly the detestable insolence of oppression would not actually, if he had the chance, lay the oppressor flat with his fist. All, however, arises from the search after a false simplicity, the aim of being, if I may so express it, more natural than it is natural to be. It would not only be more human, it would be more humble of us to be content to be complex. The truest kinship with humanity would lie in doing as humanity has always done, accepting with a sportsmanlike relish the estate to which we are called, the star of our happiness, and the fortunes of the land of our birth.

The work of Tolstoy has another and more special significance. It represents the re-assertion of a certain awful common-sense which characterized the most extreme utterances of Christ. It is true that we cannot turn the cheek to the smiter ; it is true that we cannot give our cloak to the robber ; civilization is too complicated, too vainglorious, too emotional. The robber would brag, and we should blush ; in other words, the robber and we are alike sentimentalists. The command of Christ is impossible, but it is not insane ; it is rather sanity preached to a planet of lunatics. If the whole world was suddenly stricken with a sense of humour it would find itself mechanically fulfilling the Sermon on the Mount.

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It is not the plain facts of the world which stand in the way of that consummation, but its passions. of vanity and self-advertisement and morbid sensibility. It is true that we cannot turn the cheek to the smiter, and the sole and sufficient reason is that we have not the pluck. Tolstoy and his followers have shown that they have the pluck, and even if we think they are mistaken, by this sign they conquer. Their theory has the strength of an utterly consistent thing. It represents that doctrine of mildness and non-resistance which is the last and most audacious of all the forms of resistance to every existing authority. It is the great strike of the Quakers which is more formidable than many sanguinary revolutions. If human beings could only succeed in achieving a real passive resistance they would be strong with the appalling strength of inanimate things, they would be calm with the maddening calm of oak or iron, which conquer without vengeance and are conquered without humiliation. The theory of Christian duty enunciated by them is that we should never conquer by force, but always, if we can, conquer by persuasion. In their mythology St. George did not conquer the dragon : he tied a pink ribbon round its neck and gave it a saucer of milk. According to them, a course of consistent kindness to Nero would have turned him into something only faintly represented by Alfred the Great. In fact, the policy recommended by this school for dealing with the bovine stupidity and bovine fury of this world is accurately

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summed up in the celebrated verse of Mr. Edward Lear :

There was an old man who said, 'How
Shall I flee from this terrible cow?
I will sit on a stile and continue to smile,
Till I soften the heart of this cow.'

Their confidence in human nature is really honourable and magnificent ; it takes the form of refusing to believe the overwhelming majority of mankind, even when they set out to explain their own motives. But although most of us would in all probability tend at first sight to consider this new sect of Christians as little less outrageous than some brawling and absurd sect in the Reformation, yet we should fall into a singular error in doing so. The Christianity of Tolstoy is, when we come to consider it, one of the most thrilling and dramatic incidents in our modern civilization. It represents a tribute to the Christian religion more sensational than the breaking of seals or the falling of stars.

From the point of view of a rationalist, the whole world is rendered almost irrational by the single phenomenon of Christian Socialism. It turns the scientific universe topsy-turvy, and makes it essentially possible that the key of all social evolution may be found in the dusty casket of some discredited creed. It cannot be amiss to consider this phenomenon as it really is.

The religion of Christ has, like many true things, been disproved an extraordinary number of times. It was disproved by the Neo-Platonist philosophers at the very moment when it was first starting

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forth upon its startling and universal career. It was disproved again by many of the sceptics of the Renaissance only a few years before its second and supremely striking embodiment, the religion of Puritanism, was about to triumph over many kings, and civilize many continents. We all agree that these schools of negation were only interludes in its history ; but we all believe naturally and inevitably that the negation of our own day is really a breaking up of the theological cosmos, an Armageddon, a Ragnorak, a twilight of the gods. The man of the nineteenth century, like a schoolboy of sixteen, believes that his doubt and depression are symbols of the end of the world. In our day the great irreligionists who did nothing but dethrone God and drive angels before them have been outstripped, distanced, and made to look orthodox and humdrum. A newer race of sceptics has found something infinitely more exciting to do than nailing down the lids upon a million coffins, and the body upon a single cross. They have disputed not only the elementary creeds, but the elementary laws of mankind, property, patriotism, civil obedience. They have arraigned civilization as openly as the materialists have arraigned theology ; they have damned all philosophers even lower than they have damned the saints. Thousands of modern men move quietly and conventionally among their fellows while holding views of national limitation or landed property that would have made Voltaire shudder like a nun listening to blasphemies. And the last and wildest phase of

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this saturnalia of scepticism, the school that goes furthest among thousands who go so far, the school that denies the moral validity of those ideals of courage or obedience which are recognized even among pirates, this school bases itself upon the literal words of Christ, like Dr. Watts or Messrs. Moody and Sankey. Never in the whole history of the world was such a tremendous tribute paid to the vitality of an ancient creed. Compared with this, it would be a small thing if the Red Sea were cloven asunder, or the sun did stand still at mid-day. We are faced with the phenomenon that a set of revolutionists whose contempt for all the ideals of family and nation would evoke horror in a thieves' kitchen, who can rid themselves of those elementary instincts of the man and the gentleman which cling to the very bones of our civilization, cannot rid themselves of the influence of two or three remote Oriental anecdotes written in corrupt Greek. The fact, when realized, has about it something stunning and hypnotic. The most convinced rationalist is in its presence suddenly stricken with a strange and ancient vision, sees the immense sceptical cosmogonies of this age as dreams going the way of a thousand forgotten heresies, and believes for a moment that the dark sayings handed down through eighteen centuries may, indeed, contain in themselves the revolutions of which we have only begun to dream.

This value which we have above suggested, unquestionably belongs to the Tolstoians, who may roughly be described as the new Quakers. With

their strange optimism, and their almost appalling logical courage, they offer a tribute to Christianity which no orthodoxies could offer. It cannot but be remarkable to watch a revolution in which both the rulers and the rebels march under the same symbol. But the actual theory of non-resistance itself, with all its kindred theories, is not, I think, characterized by that intellectual obviousness and necessity which its supporters claim for it. A pamphlet before us shows us an extraordinary number of statements about the New Testament, of which the accuracy is by no means so striking as the confidence. To begin with, we must protest against a habit of quoting and paraphrasing at the same time. When a man is discussing what Jesus meant, let him state first of all what He said, not what the man thinks He would have said if He had expressed Himself more clearly. Here is an instance of question and answer :

Q. 'How did our Master Himself sum up the law in a few words?'

A. 'Be ye merciful, be ye perfect even as your Father ; your Father in a spirit world is merciful, is perfect.'

There is nothing in this, perhaps, which Christ might not have said except the abominable metaphysical modernism of 'the spirit world' ; but to say that it is recorded that He did say it, is like saying it is recorded that He preferred palm-trees to sycamores. It is a simple and unadulterated untruth. The author should know that these words have meant a thousand things to a thousand

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people, and that if more ancient sects had paraphrased them as cheerfully as he, he would never have had the text upon which he founds his theory. In a pamphlet in which plain printed words cannot be left alone, it is not surprising if there are misstatements upon larger matters. Here is a statement clearly and philosophically laid down which we can only content ourselves with flatly denying: 'The fifth rule of our Lord is that we should take special pains to cultivate the same-kind of regard for people of foreign countries, and for those generally who do not belong to us, or even have an antipathy to us, which we already entertain towards our own people, and those who are in sympathy with us.' I should very much like to know where in the whole of the New Testament the author finds this violent, unnatural and immoral proposition. Christ did not have the same kind of regard for one person as for another. We are specifically told that there were certain persons whom He specially loved. It is most improbable that He thought of other nations as He thought of His own. The sight of His national city moved Him to tears, and the highest compliment He paid was, 'Behold an Israelite indeed.' The author has simply confused two entirely distinct things. Christ commanded us to have love for all men, but even if we had equal love for all men, to speak of having the same love for all men is merely bewildering nonsense. If we love a man at all, the impression he produces on us must be vitally different to the impression produced by another man

whom we love. To speak of having the same kind of regard for both is about as sensible as asking a man whether he prefers chrysanthemums or billiards. Christ did not love humanity; He never said He loved humanity: He loved men. Neither He nor anyone else can love humanity; it is like loving a gigantic centipede. And the reason that the Tolstoians can even endure to think of an equally distributed affection is that their love of humanity is a logical love, a love into which they are coerced by their own theories, a love which would be an insult to a tom-cat.

But the greatest error of all lies in the mere act of cutting up the teaching of the New Testament into five rules. It precisely and ingeniously misses the most dominant characteristic of the teaching—its absolute spontaneity. The abyss between Christ and all His modern interpreters is that we have no record that He ever wrote a word, except with His finger in the sand. The whole is the history of one continuous and sublime conversation. Thousands of rules have been deduced from it before these Tolstoian rules were made, and thousands will be deduced afterwards. It was not for any pompous proclamation, it was not for any elaborate output of printed volumes; it was for a few splendid and idle words that the cross was set up on Calvary, and the earth gaped, and the sun was darkened at noonday.

THE MISER AND HIS FRIENDS

It is a sign of sharp sickness in a society when it is actually led by some special sort of lunatic. A mild touch of madness may even keep a man sane ; for it may keep him modest. So some exaggerations in the State may remind it of its own normal. But it is bad when the head is cracked ; when the roof of the commonwealth has a tile loose.

The two or three cases of this that occur in history have always been gibbeted gigantically. Thus Nero has become a black proverb, not merely because he was an oppressor, but because he was also an æsthete—that is, an erotomaniac. He not only tortured other people's bodies ; he tortured his own soul into the same red revolting shapes. Though he came quite early in Roman Imperial history and was followed by many austere and noble emperors, yet for us the Roman Empire was never quite cleansed of that memory of the sexual madman. The populace or barbarians from whom we come could not forget the hour when they came to the highest place of the earth, saw the huge pedestal of the earthly omnipotence, read on it Divus Cæsar, and looked up and saw a statue without a head.

It is the same with that ugly entanglement before the Renaissance, from which, alas, most

memories of the Middle Ages are derived. Louis XI was a very patient and practical man of the world ; but (like many good business men) he was mad. The morbidity of the intriguer and the torturer clung about everything he did, even when it was right. And just as the great Empire of Antoninus and Aurelius never wiped out Nero, so even the silver splendour of the latter saints, such as Vincent de Paul, has never painted out for the British public the crooked shadow of Louis XI. Whenever the unhealthy man has been on top, he has left a horrible savour that humanity finds still in its nostrils. Now in our time the unhealthy man is on top ; but he is not the man mad on sex, like Nero ; or mad on statecraft, like Louis XI ; he is simply the man mad on money. Our tyrant is not the satyr or the torturer ; but the miser.

The modern miser has changed much from the miser of legend and anecdote ; but only because he has grown yet more insane. The old miser had some touch of the human artist about him in so far that he collected gold—a substance that can really be admired for itself, like ivory or old oak. An old man who picked up yellow pieces had something of the simple ardour, something of the mystical materialism of a child who picks out yellow flowers. Gold is but one kind of coloured clay, but coloured clay can be very beautiful. The modern idolator of riches is content with far less genuine things. The glitter of guineas is like the glitter of buttercups, the chink of pelf is like the

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chime of bells, compared with the dreary papers and dead calculations which make the hobby of the modern miser.

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The modern millionaire loves nothing so lovable as a coin. He is content sometimes with the dead crackle of notes ; but far more often with the mere repetition of noughts in a ledger, all as like each other as eggs to eggs. And as for comfort, the old miser could be comfortable, as many tramps and savages are, when he was once used to being unclean. A man could find some comfort in an unswept attic or an unwashed shirt. But the Yankee millionaire can find no comfort with five telephones at his bed-head and ten minutes for his lunch. The round coins in the miser's stocking were safe in some sense. The round noughts in the millionaire's ledger are safe in no sense ; the same fluctuation which excites him with their increase depresses him with their diminution. The miser at least collects coins ; his hobby is numismatics. The man who collects noughts collects nothings.

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It may be admitted that the man amassing millions is a bit of an idiot ; but it may be asked in what sense does he rule the modern world. The answer to this is very important and rather curious. The evil enigma for us here is not the rich, but the very rich. The distinction is important ; because this special problem is separate

from the old general quarrel about rich and poor that runs through the Bible and all strong books, old and new. The special problem today is that certain powers and privileges have grown so world-wide and unwieldy that they are out of the power of the moderately rich as well as of the moderately poor. They are out of the power of everybody except a few millionaires—that is, misers. In the old normal friction of normal wealth and poverty I am myself on the Radical side. I think that a Berkshire squire has too much power over his tenants ; that a Brompton builder has too much power over his workmen ; that a West London doctor has too much power over the poor patients in the West London Hospital.

But a Berkshire squire has no power over cosmopolitan finance, for instance. A Brompton builder has not money enough to run a Newspaper Trust. A West End doctor could not make a corner in quinine and freeze everybody out. The merely rich are not rich enough to rule the modern market. The things that change modern history, the big national and international loans, the big educational and philanthropic foundations, the purchase of numberless newspapers, the big prices paid for peerages, the big expenses often incurred in elections—these are getting too big for everybody except the misers : the men with the largest of earthly fortunes and the smallest of earthly aims.

There are two other odd and rather important things to be said about them. The first is this :

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that with this aristocracy we do not have the chance of a lucky variety in types which belongs to larger and looser aristocracies. The moderately rich include all kinds of people—even good people. Even priests are sometimes saints; and even soldiers are sometimes heroes. Some doctors have really grown wealthy by curing their patients and not by flattering them; some brewers have been known to sell beer. But among the very rich you will never find a really generous man, even by accident. They may give their money away, but they will never give themselves away; they are egoistic, secretive, dry as old bones. To be smart enough to get all that money you must be dull enough to want it.

Lastly, the most serious point about them is this: that the new miser is flattered for his meanness and the old one never was. It was never called self-denial in the old miser that he lived on bones. It is called self-denial in the new millionaire if he lives on beans. A man like Dancer was never praised as a Christian saint for going in rags. A man like Rockefeller is praised as a sort of pagan stoic for his early rising or his unassuming dress. His 'simple' meals, his 'simple' clothes, his 'simple' funeral, are all extolled as if they were creditable to him. They are disgraceful to him: exactly as disgraceful as the tatters and vermin of the old miser were disgraceful to *him*. To be in rags for charity would be the condition of a saint; to be in rags for money was that of a filthy old fool. Precisely in the same way, to be

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'simple' for charity is the state of a saint ; to be 'simple' for money is that of a filthy old fool. Of the two I have more respect for the old miser, gnawing bones in an attic : if he was not nearer to God, he was at least a little nearer to men. His simple life was a little more like the life of the real poor.

THE SHOP OF GHOSTS : A GOOD DREAM

NEARLY all the best and most precious things in the universe you can get for a halfpenny. I make an exception, of course, of the sun, the moon, the earth, people, stars, thunderstorms, and such trifles. You can get them for nothing. But the general principle will be at once apparent. In the street behind me, for instance, you can now get a ride on an electric tram for a halfpenny. To be on an electric tram is to be on a flying castle in a fairy tale. You can get quite a large number of brightly coloured sweets for a halfpenny.

But if you want to see what a vast and bewildering array of valuable things you can get at a halfpenny each, you should do as I was doing last night. I was gluing my nose against the glass of a very small and dimly lit toy-shop in one of the greyest and leanest of the streets of Battersea. But dim as was that square of light, it was filled (as a child once said to me) with all the colours God ever made. Those toys of the poor were like the children who buy them ; they were all dirty ; but they were all bright. For my part, I think brightness more important than cleanliness ; since the first is of the soul, and the second of the

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body. You must excuse me ; I am a democrat ; I know I am out of fashion in the modern world.

As I looked at that palace of pigmy wonders, at small green omnibuses, at small blue elephants, at small black dolls, and small red Noah's arks, I must have fallen into some sort of unnatural trance. That lit shop-window became like the brilliantly lit stage when one is watching some highly coloured comedy. I forgot the grey houses and the grimy people behind me as one forgets the dark galleries and the dim crowds at a theatre. It seemed as if the little objects behind the glass were small, not because they were toys, but because they were objects far away. The green omnibus was really a green omnibus, a green Bayswater omnibus, passing across some huge desert on its ordinary way to Bayswater. The blue elephant was no longer blue with paint ; he was blue with distance. The black doll was really a negro relieved against passionate tropic foliage in the land where every weed is flaming and only man is black. The red Noah's ark was really the enormous ship of earthly salvation riding on the rain-swollen sea, red in the first morning of hope.

Every one, I suppose, knows such stunning instants of abstraction, such brilliant blanks in the mind. In such moments one can see the face of one's own best friend as an unmeaning pattern of spectacles or moustaches. They are commonly marked by the two signs of the slowness of their growth and the suddenness of their termination.

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The return to real thinking is often as abrupt as bumping into a man. Very often indeed (in my case) it is bumping into a man. But in any case the awakening is always emphatic and, generally speaking, it is always complete. Now, in this case, I did come back with a shock of sanity to the consciousness that I was, after all, only staring into a dingy little toy-shop ; but in some strange way the mental cure did not seem to be final. There was still in my mind an unmanageable something that told me that I had strayed into some odd atmosphere, or that I had already done some odd thing. I felt as if I had worked a miracle or committed a sin. It was as if I had (at any rate) stepped across some border in the soul.

To shake off this dangerous and dreamy sense I went into the shop and tried to buy wooden soldiers. The man in the shop was very old and broken, with confused white hair covering his head and half his face, hair so startlingly white that it looked almost artificial. Yet though he was senile and even sick, there was nothing of suffering in his eyes ; he looked rather as if he were gradually falling asleep in a not unkindly decay. He gave me the wooden soldiers, but when I put down the money he did not at first seem to see it ; then he blinked at it feebly, and then he pushed it feebly away.

‘No, no,’ he said vaguely. ‘I never have. I never have. We are rather old-fashioned here.’

‘Not taking money,’ I replied, ‘seems to me more like an uncommonly new fashion than an old one.’

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'I never have,' said the old man, blinking and blowing his nose; 'I've always given presents. I'm too old to stop.'

'Good heavens!' I said. 'What can you mean? Why, you might be Father Christmas.'

'I am Father Christmas,' he said apologetically, and blew his nose again.

The lamps could not have been lighted yet in the street outside. At any rate, I could see nothing against the darkness but the shining shop-window. There were no sounds of steps or voices in the street; I might have strayed into some new and sunless world. But something had cut the cords of common sense, and I could not feel even surprise except sleepily. Something made me say, 'You look ill, Father Christmas.'

'I am dying,' he said.

I did not speak, and it was he who spoke again.

'All the new people have left my shop. I cannot understand it. They seem to object to me on such curious and inconsistent sort of grounds, these scientific men, and these innovators. They say that I give people superstitions and make them too visionary; they say I give people sausages and make them too coarse. They say my heavenly parts are too heavenly; they say my earthly parts are too earthly; I don't know what they want, I'm sure. How can heavenly things be too heavenly, or earthly things too earthly? How can one be too good, or too jolly? I don't understand. But I understand one thing well enough. These modern people are living and I am dead.'

THE SHOP OF GHOSTS: A GOOD DREAM

'You may be dead,' I replied. 'You ought to know. But as for what they are doing—do not call it living.'

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A silence fell suddenly between us which I somehow expected to be unbroken. But it had not fallen for more than a few seconds when, in the utter stillness, I distinctly heard a very rapid step coming nearer and nearer along the street. The next moment a figure flung itself into the shop and stood framed in the doorway. He wore a large white hat tilted back as if in impatience; he had tight bright old-fashioned pantaloons, a gaudy old-fashioned stock and waistcoat, and an old fantastic coat. He had large wide-open luminous eyes like those of an arresting actor; he had a fiery, nervous face, and a fringe of beard. He took in the shop and the old man in a look that seemed literally a flash and uttered the exclamation of a man utterly staggered.

'Good lord!' he cried out; 'it can't be you! It isn't you! I came to ask where your grave was.'

'I'm not dead yet, Mr. Dickens,' said the old gentleman, with a feeble smile; 'but I'm dying,' he hastened to add reassuringly.

'But, dash it all, you were dying in my time,' said Mr. Charles Dickens with animation; 'and you don't look a day older.'

'I've felt like this for a long time,' said Father Christmas.

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Mr. Dickens turned his back and put his head out of the door into the darkness.

'Dick,' he roared at the top of his voice; 'he's still alive.'

Another shadow darkened the doorway, and a much larger and more full-blooded gentleman in an enormous periwig came in, fanning his flushed face with a military hat of the cut of Queen Anne. He carried his head well back like a soldier, and his hot face had even a look of arrogance, which was suddenly contradicted by his eyes, which were literally as humble as a dog's. His sword made a great clatter, as if the shop were too small for it.

'Indeed,' said Sir Richard Steele, 'tis a most prodigious matter, for the man was dying when we wrote about Sir Roger de Coverley and his Christmas Day.'

My senses were growing dimmer and the room darker. It seemed to be filled with new-comers.

'It hath ever been understood,' said a burly man, who carried his head humorously and obstinately a little on one side—I think he was Ben Jonson—'It hath ever been understood, consule Jacobo, under our King James and her late Majesty, that such good and hearty customs were fallen sick, and like to pass from the world. This grey beard most surely was no lustier when I knew him than now.'

And I also thought I heard a green-clad man, like Robin Hood, say in some mixed Norman French. 'But I saw the man dying.'

THE SHOP OF GHOSTS : A GOOD DREAM

'I have felt like this a long time,' said Father Christmas, in his feeble way again.

Mr. Charles Dickens suddenly leant across to him.

'Since when?' he asked. 'Since you were born?'

'Yes,' said the old man, and sank shaking into a chair. 'I have been always dying.'

Mr. Dickens took off his hat with a flourish like a man calling a mob to rise.

'I understand it now,' he cried, 'you will never die.'

GOING FOR A WALK

ALMOST all those who write about walking make it a very serious business. They obviously believe that there is some special merit in carrying your luggage on your back, in covering long distances, in arriving footsore and dust-smeared at the end of the day at a third-rate inn, and in never staying anywhere long enough to do much more than take out a road-map and consider the next day's journey. This, it seems to me, is a brutal form of pleasure that should no more be encouraged than bull-fighting. And, indeed, if one has to choose between being brutal to oneself and being brutal to a bull, the bull is the tougher animal of the two, and is likely to suffer less as a result of harsh treatment. Long walks with a pack on one's back are no doubt necessary in time of war, but I do not see why a man should go on marching in times of peace. It seems to me an extraordinary example of human contradictoriness to go any great distance on foot when it is possible to go by train or by motor-car. It would be as reasonable to swim instead of travelling by steamer. It is a reversion to savagery and a foolish pretence that the twentieth century does not exist. People who indulge in those orgies of fatigue known as walking tours say that it is delightful to arrive weary at an inn and to sit down to cold roast chicken



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and a bottle of wine. It surely ought to be possible to enjoy cold roast chicken and a bottle of wine without paying so excessive a price for it. Why should it be thought that I need to stun my senses with walking in order to sit down cheerfully to dinner? I am sure that those who take the greatest pleasure in eating have seldom any love for unnecessary exercise. And, indeed, from all I know of walkers, I should say that of all men they have the least delicate palate. They will lunch on biscuits and cheese and bitter beer in a public-house and recall this a year later as a feast for gods. Not once in the course of their journey do they sit down to a good honest meal such as they would expect, and rightly expect, to be given at home. They lose the finer edge of appetite, and after the horrors of a long march take greedily to food that a good-natured woman would not give to her Pekinese. I do not know, indeed, in what respect these long and tedious walks can make a man happier, unless he has a taste for saving money. To go on foot is certainly to save a coach-fare or a railway-fare, and to stay at the worst inn is cheaper than staying at the best hotel. But I do not think that this is a consideration that weighed with such noble walkers as Hazlitt and Stevenson or weighs with Mr. Belloc. They must have been lured on by some finer pleasure. Or we may put the blame on some demon of unrest that incites a man always to expect the perfect town a little way beyond the town at which he has just

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arrived. There is no denying that most of us, when we arrive at a place, immediately begin to think of other places to which we may go from it. If I arrive in Bath, I have scarcely looked at the town when I find myself longing for a day at Wells. If I go to St. Ives, instead of settling down to enjoy the place itself, I immediately begin to plan an excursion to the Land's End or the Lizard. The place at which one is not is more potently attractive than the place at which one is, and one longs for a sight of the world on the other side of the hill or on the far side of the headland as though one might suddenly step into magic. Men have gone round the earth for no other reason. The men who go on walking tours, I imagine, must also be in search of the magic on the far side of the headland and on the other side of the hill. This, and not any inhuman pleasure in aching limbs and burning feet, is their legitimate defence.

For myself, if I go for a walk, it is merely because I cannot sit still all day in one place. All human beings feel the need to circulate. Most of us, however, differ from the long-distance walkers in liking to settle down in one place to which we may always come back, as a swimmer comes back to the ladder, after our small peregrinations. Our notion of a walk is anything from three to five miles. If at the end of the outward journey we can have a quarter of an hour's rest and a cup of tea, we do not care if it extends to seven miles. Being human, we are subject to temptation and

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are constantly pushing on an extra mile or so out of curiosity. But, on the whole, we find little difficulty in being back in good time for meals, and, if we are suddenly seized by the desire to go a long way, we either take a train or hire a motor-car. There are men of large and rebellious spirit who would feel enslaved if they could not go for a walk without knowing that at the end of three miles they had to turn and make their way back to a meal. If this is slavery, the yoke, it seems to me, is a very light one. After all what evidence is there that happiness is more likely to be found at twenty miles' distance from the place where one breakfasted than at three? If you wish to enjoy walking, the most important thing is to choose a hotel or lodging where the food is good, where the bed is comfortable, and where the surrounding country within a three or four miles' radius contains plenty of roads and paths, a small and easily-climbed hill, a wood, open fields, a river or stream of some kind, and a number of duck-ponds. If you care for the sea, you can dispense with most of these things, and you can quite contentedly go the same walk day after day, sauntering round the harbour, clambering over the less difficult rocks, crossing the half-mile of strand where the seagulls run out of your way, and so on to the path among the brambles and bracken that leads round the green and stony headland. I do not say that you can take this walk three times a day and wish for no other. Even here the demon of discontent will drive you inland at times

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up the steep lane with the trickle of water running down it and, at the end of it, the smell of farms and of cows. But there is no doubt that at the sea we are not nearly so eager for variety in our walks as we are in other places. The demon of unrest finds its image in the sea itself and is pacified. Even in inland places, however, I am not sure that, much as I love a choice of walks, I do not on most occasions settle down to one favourite walk repeated again and again and leave most of the others to the leisure of the future. After all, the chief object of a walk is not to go anywhere in particular, but is to find a good place to sit down. When you have found this, you return to it day after day, and, instead of attempting to make your way round the world, sit down on a tree-stump or on the grass and allow the world to make its way round you. This, I think, is the only way in which to see the world. If you make yourself a part of the procession you cannot see the procession. To do this, you must be content to be a silent spectator, and in time the procession will surely begin. Infant rabbits that have as yet hardly learned the first letter of fear will come out of their holes, and, still grey as rats, with alert ears and dangling paws, will take a look round at the grassy earth. The lizard will creep up the stalk of the dead bracken in the sun. The blue-tit with its beak full of moss will descend with a leap from bough to bough and flutter without alarm to the hole at the foot of the tree where two of them, happy in their early married life,

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seem to be making a nest. Or a pied woodpecker may suddenly alight on the bare trunk of a tree and peck at it, like a County Council navvy at work on street repairs, till, suspecting that there is a stranger in the wood, he looks about him fearfully and begins to edge round to the far side of the tree like a carrying spider. Or you may pick up a fir-cone and find a yellow ladybird (with, if I remember right, brown spots) hidden in its shelves. And, above your head, one song will follow another, and hedge-sparrow, wren, willow-wren, cuckoo, blackcap, robin, and the circus of all the tits, will one after another appear, or at least become audible and so appear to the imagination, and melt into nothingness again. Not, indeed, that you can be sure that anything new will happen. But the best way to make sure of its happening is to sit still and wait for it. Nature reveals itself little by little, and, if you wished to write a life-history even of a woodmouse, you would have to spend years of your own life waiting and watching, bending over its cradle, turning a kindly eye on its wooing, a guest at its wedding, a friend in the bosom of its family, and, finally, a mourner at its grave. Who can measure the hopes and fears of a snail? Who knows even so familiar a bird as the robin in its closest secrets or could write the 'Othellos' and 'King Lears' of its brief existence? It is easier to write the life of Mr. Gladstone than the life of a mole. If Mr. Gladstone had only become visible once in a blue moon to a patient watcher, and even then had

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torn his way back into darkness in frenzied haste, Lord Morley could hardly have written three volumes about him. Hence most of us are a great deal more mystified by the doings of beasts and birds than by the doings of men. I dropped into a country inn the other evening, where a couple of men, workers at the watercress beds, were talking about the cuckoo that had been heard for the first time that morning. The landlord said that it was a wonderful thing how cuckoos come to England all the way from Africa and nobody sees them coming. 'What makes you think the cuckoo comes from Africa?' asked one of the men, who had a military ribbon sewed on his shabby waistcoat. 'Isn't it known?' said the landlord; 'doesn't everybody say so?' The man pulled at a clay pipe. 'I been to Africa,' he declared, 'and I never saw a cuckoo. I know lots of men been to Africa, and I've asked them this question, and not one of them could ever tell me he saw a cuckoo.' His friend nodded. 'I been to Africa, too,' he said. 'And did you ever see a cuckoo?' the other asked him. 'No, I never saw no cuckoo,' was the answer. 'But where,' demanded the orthodox landlord, 'does the cuckoo go when it leaves England?' 'Ah!' said the man, taking the pipe out of his mouth, 'but *does* it go? Or does it change its plumage and turn into a 'awk? Did you ever notice that there are more 'awks in winter than in summer?' I asked him if he also believed that swallows stayed in England and hibernated at the bottom of ponds. 'No,' he

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said, 'swallows have been seen from the light-houses coming across. Mind, I don't say I *believe* a cuckoo turns into a 'awk. But I want to meet a man who can honestly tell me he has ever seen a cuckoo in Africa. It's a wonderful thing,' he added, 'to think that thousands of birds can find their way all those miles over the sea from Russia and Africa and God knows where, and each of them drop down in its own place. It's as if each of them knew exactly. How do they know? Wild duck, wild geese—they all do it.' To hear birds talked of in this way in a public-house—and I have often heard talk of the sort in ill-lit bars, both in fishing-villages and in country places—confirmed me in the opinion that an interest in birds, instead of being a modern heresy, as is sometimes maintained, is one of the common and secular interests of mankind. Let your morning walk include the dell of thorn and bramble where the two nightingales, their white breasts visible through the leaves, are practising their songs, and let your evening walk include a visit to the little public-house—it is only a hundred yards away—and you will agree with me. The landlord's face is bright with a really enthusiastic smile as he nods and says: 'I reckon the cock chaäfinch is a purty bird.' And the man with the clay pipe nods and agrees, 'None purtier.'

ON GOING ABROAD

THE worst of going abroad is that the feeling of being abroad does not last beyond a few days unless one goes still further abroad to a new place. How exciting is the first day in Dieppe, with houses of a different shape and a different colour from the houses to which one is accustomed and with the names and the trades of the shopkeepers all seeming novel and fantastical! How much more charming still is Italy, with the shop-fronts painted all over with words ending in 'o' and 'ia' and 'a'! Even such a word as 'bottiglieria' seems to speak of a wine-bar in wonderland, and every jeweller's and haberdasher's and silk-merchant's gives as much pleasure to the fancy as if it were a shop discovered under the ocean with a merman for shopwalker and a concourse of mermaids serving at the counters. The look of the streets is so strange that one walks through them with a kind of secret smile. The policemen are different. The cabs are different. The boys selling lottery-tickets on the pavements, the Fascisti lurching along in their black shirts, the monks in their sandals, are all figures that break in with the effect of surprise on common experience, and for a few days one almost mistakes novelty for Paradise. For a few days one even finds oneself assiduously going into churches in a spirit of exal-

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tation simply because they are not the churches of the city in which one lives. As for the food, how charming, if it is edible, is the first meal after one's arrival in a strange town! I confess I am incapable of criticizing the food in a foreign country—always excepting such dishes as boiled mussels, braised lettuces, etc.—for twenty-four hours after arrival. Even the *vin ordinaire*—which, to be quite honest, is usually no better than the ordinary wine at an English wine merchant's—seems worth a compliment at the first two meals, and, if one is of a romantic disposition, it may be a month or more before one discovers how bad it is. Time passes, however, and, even though abroad, we begin to feel at home. Things no longer please us merely because they are novel. We pass the shops with as little interest as if they bore above their windows such accustomed inscriptions as 'Family Butcher', 'Stationer', or 'Italian Warehouseman'. We cease to notice that the policemen look different from any other policemen. The trams no longer excite us by their unusual colour and design. The streets become our familiar walks. We find it extraordinarily easy to pass a church without going inside. The flavour of the food becomes monotonous. Our palate recovers its rectitude, and becomes critical of the wines. We realize that we were the victims of an illusion, and that we could have preserved the illusion only by going further and reviving it in another country or, at least, in another town. I am not sure that the illusion is worth having at

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the price, but many men have become nomads in pursuit of it, travelling from country to country as though no country could be delightful after it was known. They are lovers of the surface, easily enamoured of many places, but passionately in love with none. They hanker after China and Arabia, because they were not born there. If they had been born in China or Arabia, they would have hankered after England and a week-end at Brighton would have seemed to them like an episode in a legend. A great deal of travel, indeed, is little more than restlessness—a continual pursuit of novelty of sensation—and springs from the dread of the boredom of custom. It is as if a man wished to sit on a painted horse—and on a new kind of painted horse every day—in a perpetual merry-go-round.

There are, I know, profounder pleasures to be got later on from foreign places than these superficial excitements over novelties. But they are the same pleasures in kind that are to be had at home. The senses are no longer the supreme means of enjoyment, but the affections are engaged, and we love the things around us all the more because they are familiar. We no longer live in obedience to a guide-book, but have made a new map of the place for ourselves in which many sights that the guide-book exalts are left out and many things not mentioned in the guide-book stand out as prominently as museums and cathedrals. Not that I would speak ill of guide-books. I cannot comfortably go about with one

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in my hand or consult it in public with eyes that glance backwards and forwards between the book and some ruined temple or great man's tomb. But I like to have one by me for an occasional private hint, and I like, on getting back to the hotel after a morning spent in sightseeing, to take up the guide-book and see what I have seen, and also what I have missed. I feel a little humiliated if, after having gone half across Europe and spent a morning in one of the show-places of the world, I have on coming home to answer 'No' to the questions: 'Did you see this?' 'Did you find that?'; 'Did you notice that wonderful so-and-so? Oh, what a pity! It's the gem of the whole place.' The guide-book judiciously studied will save you from many of these humiliations, though not from all, for the ordinary traveller is a jealous being and will not be content till he has proved that you have overlooked the thing without parallel—that, if you have seen the right picture, you have seen it in the wrong light by going in the afternoon instead of the morning—that your day spent in visiting some famous church was wasted because you didn't see the cloisters, as the cloisters are the only thing that raises it above fifty other churches of the same kind. So far as I can judge, it is the object of many travellers to convince some poor fellow-creature just returned from abroad that he might as well have stayed at home, and that he has not used any of his opportunities. They even try to prove that you have eaten in the wrong restaurants, taken

the wrong guide-book, and stayed at the wrong hotel. They beam with a horrible philanthropy as they condole with you over what you have missed. But you know all the time that they are secretly enjoying your poverty of experience and congratulating themselves on their own riches. When I was younger, and bolder than I am now, I could have stood up to these people better, and told them with half-truth that I hate sightseeing, and that, of the famous sights that I have seen, not more than half have given me more pleasure than I could get in a London park. I have now a sort of cowardly longing to see everything that everybody talks about, though the pleasure of seeing many of these things is little more than the pleasure of curiosity satisfied. The trouble is that the imagination is not a slave that will take orders from us and that will respond as it is expected to respond at all times and in all places. We go in its company to see a great picture, and stand waiting for its verdict. If we held a dialogue with it, we should say on many such occasions : 'Come now. This is one of the great pictures of the world. Everybody says so. At least, everybody says so except the people who always contradict what everybody says. Don't you admire it, too? You don't seem very enthusiastic. Don't you think it very good?' And the imagination would—at least, now and then—reply : 'I don't know whether it's good or not, and to-day I don't care. You dragged me here against my will, when I would rather you had sat down

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in a chair outside a café and watched the buses passing. Besides, picture-galleries always depress me. The human beings in them never look natural. Many of them look like uneasy ghosts that have wandered into the wrong hell. The ones that are enjoying themselves and ~~expressing~~ their enjoyment aloud are still more disturbing. I can't help listening to them, and one cannot be absorbed in the conversation of one's fellow-creatures and in the Holy Family at the same time. If you had brought me here yesterday, I might have felt differently, so I shan't go so far as to say that the picture is positively bad. But today I simply don't enjoy looking at it. Don't let's bother any more about pictures today. Come along to a café.' And how gladly we should go!

When once you have settled down and feel really at home in a new place, you need no longer drag your imagination about in this fashion, seeing the things you ought to see instead of the things you wish to see. The resident alien in London does not visit Westminster Abbey with a guide-book, nor does he even go into the National Gallery except when it is the whim of his imagination to do so. If he likes London, it is not because of the things that are marked as important in the guide-books about London. It is because of the things that he discovers capriciously and by accident. He can live in his own London, not in other people's London. London becomes to him a city of personal associations and is no longer a mere capital of famous sights. We are some-

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times told that the American visitor sees more of London than the people who live in it. This, I think, is true only in a superficial sense. The American sees more of guide-book London, but the Londoner sees more of the London that is worth seeing. He sees his own house and his friend's houses—buildings that contain far more of the things that make life interesting to him than cathedrals and palaces and museums of the arts. He sees his own garden, which contains more pleasures for him than the greatest of the parks, and he sees his own cat, which surpasses the King's horses or the lordliest beast in the Zoo as the paragon of animals. And do not think that he does not see as many novelties as if he were taxi-ing from church to church and from museum to museum in a foreign city. The seasons alone should give a man all the novelties he needs. The very street in which he lives changes from hour to hour. It is one street when the sun is shining, another street in rain, and another under the full moon. Foreign travel is pleasant chiefly because it makes us realize that we are among novelties, but when we are sufficiently awake to see the constant flow of novelties in the world at our doors, we can enjoy all the excitement of foreign travel along with the pleasure of being at home. The worst of it is that, though I know this, I also know that if I had a fortune I should spend some of it in Florence, and a little in Assisi, and might even be tempted as far as Athens. But no further. I don't mind reading about the ends of the earth in

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fiction or in travel-books, but I trust that, if I ever see them, it will be many years hence and from a window in Heaven. If I were offered a free trip round the world, I might accept the offer through weakness, but I do not wish to go round the world. Have I not been round the sun once a year ever since I was born? That seems to have satisfied any cravings I may have had for distant travel, or at least to have made a jaunt round this pigmy earth a matter of small consequence. Besides, I should hate to meet all those people who are described in the books by anthropologists. I would far rather go to Southend than to the South Seas. And I don't very much want to go to Southend.

SILENCE

SILENCE is unnatural to man. He begins life with a cry and ends it in stillness. In the interval he does all he can to make a noise in the world, and there are few things of which he stands in more fear than of the absence of noise. Even his conversation is in great measure a desperate attempt to prevent a dreadful silence. If he is introduced to a fellow mortal, and a number of pauses occur in the conversation, he regards himself as a failure, a worthless person, and is full of envy of the emptiest-headed chatterbox. He knows that ninety-nine per cent of human conversation means no more than the buzzing of a fly, but he longs to join in the buzz and to prove that he is a man and not a waxwork figure. The object of conversation is not, for the most part, to communicate ideas : it is to keep up the buzzing sound. There are, it must be admitted, different qualities of buzz : there is even a buzz that is as exasperating as the continuous ping of a mosquito. But at a dinner-party one would rather be a mosquito than a mute. Most buzzing, fortunately, is agreeable to the ear, and some of it is agreeable even to the mind. He would be a foolish man, however, who waited until he had a wise thought to take part in the buzzing with his neighbours. Those who despise the weather

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as a conversational opening seem to me to be ignorant of the reason why human beings wish to talk. Very few human beings join in a conversation in the hope of learning anything new. Some of them are content if they are merely allowed to go on making a noise into other people's ears, though they have nothing to tell them except that they have seen two or three new plays or that they had bad food in a Swiss hotel. At the end of an evening during which they have said nothing at immense length, they justly plume themselves on their success as conversationalists. I have heard a young man holding up the monologue of a prince among modern wits for half an hour in order to tell us absolutely nothing about himself with opulent longwindedness. None of us except the young man himself liked it, but he looked as happy as if he had had a crown on his head.

Many of us, indeed, do not enjoy conversation unless it is we ourselves who are making the most conspicuous noise. This, I think, is a vice in conversation, but it has its origin in a natural hatred of silence. The young man was so much afraid of silence that he dared not risk being silent himself lest a universal silence should follow. If he failed as a talker, it was because he did not sufficiently realize that conversation should be not only a buzz but a sympathetic buzz. That is why the weather is so useful a subject. It brings people at once to an experience which is generally shared and enables them, as it were, to buzz on

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the same note. Having achieved this harmony, they advance by miraculous stages to other sympathies, and, as note succeeds note, a pleasant and varied little melody of conversation is made, as satisfying to the ear and mind as the music of a humming-top. The discovery of new notes of sympathy is the secret of all good conversation. It is because this is necessary to good conversation that a conversation of a party of three is so often a failure. Two of them discover a note of sympathy and they begin to buzz on it enthusiastically, forgetful of the fact that it is an occasion not for a double but for a triple buzz. Two of them, perhaps, have been at the same college of the same university. They go on for an hour happily sharing experiences in sentences like 'You remember old Crocker?' 'You remember the day he——?' 'You remember the night he stole the policeman's helmet?' 'But the funniest thing of all was the day he threw the bowl of tulips out of the window and nearly brained old——' (naming a famous professor of Greek). Reminiscences are the best conversation in the world for two; they warm the heart and excite the brain like wine. But the third man is all the more conscious of being out in the cold, because these names and events, which are a sort of algebraic symbols of the emotions to them, are to him meaningless. He does not know who 'old Towser' was, or who 'old Billy Tubbs', or who 'old Snorter Richardson'. He smiles mechanically as the others laugh with dreamier and dreamier eyes

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over incidents that convey all the fun of youth to them but that to him seem mere inanities of the memory. A conversation of this kind is bad, indeed, because it condemns the third man to the torture of compulsory silence. You may have an excellent conversation of three where one man is voluntarily silent, but you cannot have good conversation where one of the three is necessarily silent.

It is not only in our social life, however, that we dread silence. We love noise more than we know, even when no other human being is present. When we go from town to live in the country we deceive ourselves if we think we are doing so in order to exchange noise for quietness. We go into the country, not in order to escape from noise, but in search of a different kind of noise. Sit in a country garden in May, and you will notice that the noise is continuous. The birds are as loquacious as women: the bees as inimical to silence as children. Cocks crow, hens cackle, dogs bark, sheep baa, cartwheels crunch, and the whole day passes in a succession of sounds which would drive us to distraction if we were really devotees of silence. When evening falls, and the voice of the last cuckoo fades into an universal stillness, we are aware of a new awe as of something supernatural. The fear of the dark is largely a fear of silence. It is difficult to believe that the world is entirely uninhabited, and, if it is not filled with the noises of men and animals, we begin—at least, a good many of us do—to suspect the

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silent presence of something unseen and terrible. Noise is companionship, and I remember that I, as a child, liked even the ticking of a clock in the bedroom. How good it was, too, to open the bedroom window and hear the pleasant prose of a corncrake coming from the meadows through the darkness! There are sounds that are terrifying at night, but they are chiefly so because of the stillness that is broken by them. The breathing of a cow behind a hedge, as you pass along a silent road at midnight, may startle you, but it is not the cow, it is the silence, that has startled you. If nature, indeed, could contrive to maintain all her busy sounds through the night, darkness would lose more than half its terrors.

For complete silence produces feelings of awe in us even in the full blaze of day. If you could imagine yourself the last living thing on earth but the plants, and if you knew that you were immortal and secure from danger for ever, what horror you would feel of a world in which there was no sound but the sound of your own feet or of your own voice if you had the heart to use it! If there were birds and dogs and cats and cows and sheep, you might endure your solitude with philosophy. I should not care for it myself even then, but I should suffer less than if I were the last living creature on a silent globe, on which a motionless sea never broke the stillness on any shore. We speak of the silence of the grave, and without noise the world would be no better than a grave. To survive alone upon its lifeless

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surface would be to be buried alive, and most of us, if we were given the choice, would commit suicide in order to escape from it. This is not to say that we never enjoy the awfulness of silence. Travellers in the mountains and among the snows, discoverers of dead and deserted cities, can thrill us with their descriptions of the profound stillness of the scenes, as though to penetrate into such silence were to step into a new world. Silence such as this keys us up to unaccustomed excitements and susceptibilities. London seen from Westminster Bridge in the silence of dawn moved Wordsworth with a majesty unknown in the busy clamour of noon. In silence we seem to approach the border of some mysterious reality that has escaped us in the din of common life. Hence it is that, if we go into a cathedral, we are offended by those who bring into it noise and restlessness. The cathedral moves us most deeply in perfect stillness. It is no mere superstition that bids us to be silent or, if we must speak, lower our voices to a whisper. We cannot even see the cathedral so that its beauty passes into the imagination and the memory save in perfect silence.

Certain religious bodies have recognized the value of silence, and mystics have told us that it is through silence rather than through speech that we arrive at a knowledge of the secret of life. Certainly, the increase in the noisiness of mankind does not seem to lead to any great increase of wisdom. Cynics are doubtful whether any useful end is served by the ceremony of the

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Two Minutes' Silence that has now become an annual event in England and some other countries on Armistice Day; but having been in a London street, when all the traffic died down into perfect stillness, and every human being in sight stood motionless as a stone in a silent world, I like a million others have felt the spell of the transformation. London of the bus and dray and warehouse seemed to be touched with a mystery and strangeness that meant more to the imagination than the hooting of horns and the hurry of trampling feet. One aged man, indeed, did advance through the deathlike stillness of the figures of his fellow creatures—an aged man in a faded bowler and with a pipe in his mouth. I do not know whether he even noticed that men and women had suddenly become statues and that the traffic of the streets was as still as the palace of the Sleeping Beauty. There was no sound on earth for a time but the whisper and squeaking of the old man's boots becoming less and less as it disappeared into the distance. Instead of breaking the silence, it seemed to intensify it. And no one even turned a head to look after him. Perhaps, he had never heard of Armistice Day. Perhaps—lucky man—he had never heard even of the war. But how typical he was of his kind in his incapacity for remaining still! The rest of us, it is true, can succeed in remaining silent for two minutes. But, at the sound of the gun, with what a cheerful tumult we rush back again into the clamour of ordinary life!

THE MOUSE : A PROBLEM

It is an engaging problem in ethics whether, if you have been lent a cottage, you have the right to feed the mice. There will for most people be only one answer to the question. Your first duty, they will tell you, is to the man who has been good enough to lend you his house, and you must do nothing that would damage it or even that would annoy him if he knew about it. On the other hand, it is reasonable to argue that the feelings of a mouse that is present are more to be considered than the feelings of a host who is absent. Besides, he need never know anything about it. He may be surprised on his return to find mice running up the clock, mice cantering up and down at the side of the fire-place, mice playing on the floor under the table, mice in his jam cupboard, mice nibbling the corners of the books on the lower shelves, mice, in fact, behaving as if the house were a vast restaurant for themselves and a crèche for their children. But, as he is a good man, he will put all this down to accident, and will never suspect that the people to whom he lent the cottage could have done anything so disgraceful as actually to scatter food on the floor and invite the mice of the neighbourhood to make themselves at home.

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I can write on the question without bias, because during the week-end I was the guest of the people who were feeding the mice and at the same time I was sleeping under the roof of the man during whose absence the mice were being fed contrary to his interests and contrary, I am sure, to his wishes. Besides, I liked the people who were feeding the mice, though I could not altogether approve of their conduct. The mouse-hole was a large orifice in the varnished floor near the hearthstone, and, when the lamp was lit, the smaller of two girls went for a biscuit, broke it into small pieces, and placed these carefully in a ring round the hole. Then she sat down and, in perfect stillness, watched the mice till bedtime. I asked her if it would disturb the mice for the rest of us to talk, but she said that the mice did not mind, that they were accustomed to it, and, indeed, were quite tame. A few minutes later I had just got to the point of what I thought was a rather amusing story when she interrupted with a vibrant, excited whisper, 'Look at the mouse.' Strange, when there is a mouse in the room, it is impossible either to tell or to listen to a story. I do not like being interrupted, but I found myself staring with the others at the little cave in the floor from which the head of a mouse had projected, like a jack-in-the-box, and was looking round at the world with its nervous, beady eyes. It apparently came to the conclusion that we did not look very dangerous—that, indeed, we were merely a number of harmless

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lunatics—and hoisting itself, head and shoulders, out of the hole, it seized a piece of biscuit and ducked back out of sight with it again. There was a chorus of 'The little darling!' 'Isn't it perfectly sweet?' 'Oh, the angel!' 'Did you ever see such a darling little pet?'—for so it is that angels and darlings in human form express themselves at sight of an animal they really like. Still, thinking of the unfortunate man who owned the cottage, I could not help reminding them that their attitude to the mouse was one of mistaken kindness. I pointed out to them that, when the owner of the house returned, he would be able to catch the mice all the more easily on account of their tameness, and that to teach them to trust human beings was merely to lure them to their deaths. Nor would death be less bitter to them, I suggested, when they told themselves that it was due to the treachery of women and children. At this, the lady all but broke down, and I thought for the moment I had persuaded her that the most humane thing she could do was to try to frighten out of its wits every mouse that put its head through the floor. 'Oh yes, indeed!' she cried, wringing her hands, as she pictured the doom of the mice at the return of the proprietor; 'it's *quite* true.' But the elder of the children demurred. 'I think it's silly,' she said. 'The mice will be caught anyway, whatever we do, poor little things. All the more need for us to give them a good time while they're alive.' 'That, also, is quite true,' said the lady, brightening up.

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'And now,' she went on, turning to me, 'let's have the rest of the story.' It is by no means easy to take up the thread of an anecdote that has been interrupted just as one has got to the point. 'Well,' I said, 'you remember how Godfrey was left with the insurance policy.' 'I'm afraid I've forgotten,' she apologized. 'The argument about the mice has driven everything else out of my mind. Do begin all over again from the beginning.' I hate having to repeat a story, but I obeyed, and was just reaching the point again, and smiling with satisfaction at the thought of the effect it would produce, when the small girl at the hearth once more called our attention with a hoarse, excited whisper: 'Look, it's coming out again!' Once more all heads turned on necks and all eyes were concentrated on the little cave in the floor. This time the mouse did not merely thrust its head and shoulders out of the hole. It shot itself out bodily, and scampered along the floor behind the coal-scuttle. 'That's the father,' said the romantic one of the small girls; and again there were enthusiastic cries of 'The darling!' 'The angel!' and 'Dear little thing!' I made no attempt to recover my anecdote, but I am afraid its double disappearance prejudiced me against the humane treatment of mice. I looked on them as my rivals—as my horribly successful rivals. Everybody, I told myself, was far more interested in mice than in me.

Yet I have always liked people who were kind

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to mice. I once knew a man whose bedroom was infested with mice. He bought a trap and set it, and during the night was awakened by the struggles of a mouse that had been caught in it. He immediately got up and released the mouse, and, next day, threw the trap into the dust-bin. Nor would he ever use a mouse-trap again. And I loved him for this. I also feel tenderly towards two maiden ladies of my acquaintance who are on such good terms with the mice in their flat that, if ever they go away for a holiday, they leave a little heap of meal on the floor 'for the mice'. The mouse, it seems to me, is a creature that we should all like, if it were not such a nuisance. Children like sweetmeats made in the shape of mice. They like a toy mouse in a cage. There is in the shape and the bright eyes of the little creature something that appeals to our affection. It is a natural pet, if it would behave like a pet. It is impossible to make war on it without twinges of conscience. There is in Coleridge's correspondence a charming letter to Cottle, in which he declares that he is threatened by famine on account of mice, but that he cannot bring himself to set a mouse-trap. He says that to bait a trap is as much as to say to the mouse, 'Come and have a piece of cheese,' and that, when it accepts the invitation, to do it to death is a betrayal of the laws of hospitality. Certainly, when you come to think of it, no Borgia ever treated a guest more dishonourably. The only honourable way to make war on mice, it seems to me, is not to

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deceive them with any pretence of friendship, as who should say, 'This is Liberty Hall. Here's cheese for you,' but to keep a cat and let the mice come out of their holes at their peril. Most people, however, would like even cats to be more humane. They hate to see a cat actually killing a mouse. It is an unequal battle, and the cat seems to enjoy it. Such things are, no doubt, necessary. But, if they must go on, they should at least go on out of sight. We may not mind conniving at the murder of a mouse, but we object to being made spectators of it and, as it were, participators. Man, after all, is a sportsman. Or a hypocrite. Or both.

As for wasps, that is another matter. Who minds killing a wasp? The only people I ever knew who minded killing a wasp were people who were frightened that the wasp would sting them before they had killed it, or that its friends would come and sting them after they had killed it. At least, those were the only people of the kind I had known till I went down into the country for the week-end. There I found a lady and two children behaving almost, though not quite, as tenderly towards wasps as towards mice. If a wasp all but drowned himself in the marmalade at breakfast, they would exclaim, 'The little darling!' and one of them would carefully take him out on the point of a fruit-knife and carry him over to the window-sill to dry his wings in the sun, poor thing! Heaven knows I have no special antipathy to wasps. I am not afraid of

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them : I move backwards at their approach merely as a precaution against accidents. Even so, I see no sense in encouraging them to such a point that one cannot eat a meal without a veritable Pleiades of wasps dancing round one's head with a noise like the noise of an orchestra of muted violins playing distressingly out of tune. It is not that I duck more nervously than other people. In fact, I often hope that other people do not notice that I am ducking at all. But it cannot be good to eat one's meals in an atmosphere in which, all the time, one wishes to duck. It is also rather disturbing to the flow of the gastric juices to be constantly wondering, while chewing one's food, whether one is looking nervous and what the children are thinking. 'There's one on your collar,' one of the children cries delightedly. 'Don't move.' Not for a ten-pound note would I so much as breathe, as she gently encourages it to fly with a spoon. 'Sweet little thing !' she comments, as it sails off into the air to join its fellow-fiddlers. Drawing a breath of relief at being rid of it, I say : 'They seem quite tame.' 'Wasps,' says the little girl, airily, 'would never hurt anybody, if people didn't hurt them.' I should like to be able to believe it, but I have heard the same thing about dogs and about human beings.

There was, I afterwards found, a wasps' nest in one of the apple-trees in the orchard. It was in a hole in a rotten branch, and, when I went out to see it, I observed the wasps from it

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burying their bodies down to the waist in the not too numerous apples of the man who had lent the cottage. Here, too, it seemed to me, was a situation in which one's duty to the man who owned the house was at least as important as one's duty to the lower animals. The only valid excuse for leaving the nest was that no one knew how to destroy it. I did—at least, I had heard that it could be done with paraffin oil—but, as I was afraid I might be asked to do it myself and that some of the wasps might come out in a mood of annoyance while I was pouring the oil on their nest, I said nothing about it. Even if I had, however, I doubt if I should have been allowed to interfere with them. The wasps were 'little angels', 'little darlings', and so forth, and must not be touched. And I must say, the wasps appeared grateful, and, though they always seemed to be going to sting one, they never actually did so. Indeed, I was becoming quite accustomed to them at meals, when some people came to tea, and a lady, who took the conventional view of wasps, kept striking them away from her face with her hand as she talked. 'Do you mind them?' our hostess asked her innocently. 'The sting of a wasp,' said the lady, as if taken aback by such a question, 'is exceedingly painful.' And she struck at another of them. The worst of it was, she always waved her hand in such a way as to strike the wasps over towards me. 'Here,' thought I to myself, feeling miserable, 'she is infuriating Olive's tame wasps, practically point-

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ing me out to them.' And, as they buzzed round my head, I could hear that their note had altered and had gone a semitone higher . . .

Since I returned from the week-end, I have been seriously considering two questions in my mind. One is, whether it is possible to be kind to mice without being cruel to your host. The other is, whether it is possible to be kind to wasps without being cruel to your guests. There is something to be said for the old-fashioned attitude to certain of the wild creatures.

TRAINS

IT is, apparently, just a hundred years since the Stockton and Darlington Railway was opened. That was the beginning of railways as we now know them, and many of us, I am sure, are in doubt, as we look back, whether we should be congratulated or commiserated. From the first, the voices of the prophets were divided on the matter. Some said that railways would prove a blessing, some that they would prove a curse. To-day the most that we know is that we have accepted them, and the smoke of a train as it passes into a wood is now all but a part of nature in which poets and painters can take delight. Certainly, if the railway train is to be condemned, it is not on the ground that it has spoiled the look of the world. Children, as soon as they are able to walk, ask to be taken where they can see a train passing. It is as though the engine were as much alive as a horse or a hen. In my own childhood I knew by name the engines that pounded by at the foot of the Wallace Park in Lisburn. Not that I could even now analyse my interest in them. But at the sound of an approaching train I was aware of a rising wave of pleasure that drowned my whole being for the moment as the great green-painted engine bore down towards me along the shining rails and

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passed in thunder and vanished with the rattle of the last carriage into the distance. Children, it may be, feel in presence of a locomotive in motion something of the awe that Blake expressed in 'Tiger, tiger'. To them a locomotive is a beautiful and powerful creature of awful symmetry—a dangerous creature of incredible swiftness. Their world is not ruined but enriched by the multitude of such wonders. Children, no doubt, are like cats: they are interested in anything that moves. And there are few things in the civilized parts of the world that move with such majestic speed as a railway train. The motor-car can hardly displace it in the childish imagination. There is no comparable music in a motor-car, no plume of cloud by day and of fire by night as a sign of its living energy. If Ruskin had foreseen how much pleasure children would get from the look and the sound and the very smell of railway trains, he would have moderated his rage against them as defilers of the countryside. For it is possible that the child enjoys the passage of an express train in much the same spirit in which Ruskin enjoyed a resounding waterfall. See a family of small children hurrying to get under a railway bridge in time for the train to go roaring over their heads, and you are forced to the conclusion that they are infant poets, rather than infant sensationalists who enjoy the din of pseudo-danger, like visitors to the Amusements Park at Wembley. Hence I think that, whatever may be said against railways, they cannot be convicted

of spoiling the landscape. A landscape that is spoiled by a railway must be a very poor landscape. Houses have done infinitely more to injure the beauty of country places than railways; yet no sentimentalist has ever used this as an argument for not having houses.

On the other hand, when we come to the alleged advantages of railways, it is more difficult to praise them without qualification. Admirable as railway trains are from an æsthetic point of view, their utility is not quite so obvious. In the nineteenth century, it was generally thought that swift mechanical means of transport would do a great service to mankind by bringing the people of different nations within easier reach of one another. In theory, benefits of this kind ought to have resulted. But have they? Do the French love the Germans any the better because the Germans are so many hours nearer to them than they used to be? Does the Pole love the Russian more ardently because the Russians can hasten to him with the aid of swift locomotives instead of slow horses? The Great War does not encourage us to believe so. People with any acquaintance with human nature, indeed, ought to have known in advance that human beings do not like each other any better as a result of living next door to each other. It is the very proximity of the Germans, indeed, that makes the French hostile to them, and they are now in practice twice as near as they were before the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. The only

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thing that could make the French and Germans love each other as, I am sure, both nations deserve to be loved, would be the invention of a machine in all respects opposite to a railway engine—a machine that would make transport so slow that Paris and Berlin would be as distant from each other in time as if they were on opposite sides of the globe. If all transport could be slowed down till no one could move faster than in a slow-motion picture on the films, there would be no more world-wars. Men would have to look for nearer neighbours with whom to fight, and Mr. Chesterton would see his dream of the battle of the boroughs fulfilled and Notting Hill marching down the slope to make war on Kensington.

The truth is, the easier it becomes to visit foreign nations, the less we seem to be intimate with them. The Englishman who went abroad in the days of sails and horses travelled as though he were actually in a foreign country the language and customs of which it was necessary to understand. The Englishman who goes abroad today as a rule carries England abroad with him ; and if he talks to anyone, it is nine times out of ten not an inhabitant of the foreign country but a fellow-countryman. Steamboats and railway trains have simply established pieces of England and America all over France and Switzerland and Italy. In doing so, they have made the French and the Swiss and the Italians more distant than ever in everything but time and space. They have made men trippers instead of travellers.

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Even so, I cannot help believing in the ultimate usefulness of railway trains, motor-cars, and aeroplanes in bringing the nations nearer each other in understanding. In spite of the evidence on the other side, I hold the same theories about the future as did the early enthusiasts for railway trains. After all, railways are still in their infancy ; they are only a hundred years old. When men grow tired of wars and of paying for wars, past, present and to come, good communications will at least make a Parliament of the World possible—not a Parliament of the World to write poetry about, but a Parliament that will be of some use in arranging a number of matters that concern all the Five Continents. It is an unpleasant prospect, but not quite so unpleasant as a continual series of wars carried on with poison-gas. The Stockton and Darlington Railway was an invention that in the end may help us to make the best of a bad business.

The Stockton and Darlington Railway, however, though it may ultimately turn out to be a useful thing for the world, has hardly yet justified itself as a useful thing for the world. The railway train, unquestionably, enables the inhabitants of England to travel faster into the country, but it has also increased the towns to such an extent that, in order to get into the country, we have to travel further than we once needed to do, so that in the end it takes just as much time to reach the country as before. In the days of horse-coaches, a Londoner in search of the country did

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not need to go beyond Hampstead. The railway has now made the country for twenty miles around a mere suburb of London, and Hemel Hempstead and Dorking are today less rural than Hampstead was a hundred years ago. All these quick means of transport hurry so many people into solitude that it soon ceases to be solitude. St. Ives in August is no longer a fishing village but a congested area. Hay Tor is no longer a lonely height on a silent moor but a good pull-up for charabancs. On the other hand, the destruction of solitude by railway trains and charabancs may easily be exaggerated. Railway trains and charabancs have certainly made an end of many a haunt of ancient peace, but they have this virtue : they concentrate the crowds on a few famous places and leave the rest of the countryside in almost as deep a silence as before. Luckily for those who prefer solitude, most human beings go where everybody else goes and are happiest in multitudes. The railway train enables us to indulge this passion of gregariousness and collects us in our thousands in Brighton and Worthing, leaving the hinterland of the downs to sheep and shepherds and the small minority of the wilfully solitary. As has been said already indeed, the houses have been far more effective than the railways in injuring the face of England, and even the houses, innocent of beauty as most of them are, are for the most part lost in the green abundance of the countryside. Surrey is, according to the pessimists, built over till it is no longer

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Surrey, but a suburb ; yet you can still stand on the top of a Surrey down and see little but trees and fields for many miles around. In the future, men will, I am sure, learn more and more the secret of concealing their houses so that they will do as little offence to the landscape as the birds' nests. Nothing can finally destroy the country so long as men love the country—not railways or houses or overpopulation. I have a notion that, a hundred years hence, England will look, not less rural, but more so than it does at the present moment.

If the railways must be indicted, indeed, it is not for destroying the countryside but for injuring the village. The village shop, I fancy, has decayed from what it used to be, now that it has been brought by the railways into competition with the great stores of the towns. There are people in villages who buy little or nothing from the small shops at their doors but do almost all their shopping in the cities. There is not the patriotism of place that there once was. Even this, however, may easily be exaggerated. There are thousands of women who prefer even a small shop at their doors to a great shop thirty miles away. Their very interest in their neighbours makes them happier in a village shop than in the soulless stores of a strange town, and the local shops put one of their chief pleasures within a few minutes' reach. So it is possible that railways have not done so much harm after all. We may have little cause as yet for putting up a statue to

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George Stephenson, but neither is there any reason for execrating his memory. And, if it were put to the votes of children, he might even get his statue. We can forgive him the more easily when we remember that it was not only a machine he invented but a huge toy that has eased the lot of many a nursemaid with her unruly charge.

THE CASE FOR THE ARTIST

By an 'artist' I mean Shakespeare and Me and Bach and Myself and Velasquez and Phidias, and even You if you have ever written four lines on the sunset in somebody's album, or modelled a Noah's Ark for your little boy in plasticine. Perhaps we have not quite reached the heights where Shakespeare stands, but we are on his track. Shakespeare can be representative of all of us, or Velasquez if you prefer him. One of them shall be President of our United Artists' Federation. Let us, then, consider what place in the scheme of things our federation can claim.

Probably we artists have all been a little modest about ourselves lately. During the war we asked ourselves gloomily what use we were to the State compared with the noble digger of coals, the much-to-be-reverenced maker of boots, and the god-like grower of wheat. Looking at the pictures in the illustrated papers of brawny, half-dressed men pushing about blocks of red-hot iron, we have told ourselves that these heroes were the pillars of society, and that we were just an incidental decoration. It was a wonder that we were allowed to live. And now in these days of strikes, when a single union of manual workers can hold up the rest of the nation, it is a bitter reflection to us that, if we were to strike, the country would



Portrait by Mr. Howard Coster

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go on its way quite happily, and nine-tenths of the population would not even know that we had downed our pens and brushes.

If there is any artist who has been depressed by such thoughts as these, let him take comfort. *We are all right.*

I made the discovery that we were all right by studying the life of the bee. All that I knew about bees until yesterday was derived from that great naturalist, Dr. Isaac Watts. In common with every one who has been a child I knew that the insect in question improved each shining hour by something honey something something every something flower. I had also heard that bees could not sting you if you held your breath, a precaution which would make conversation by the herbaceous border an affair altogether too spasmodic ; and, finally, that in any case the same bee could only sting you once—though, apparently, there was no similar provision of Nature's that the same person could not be stung twice.

Well, that was all that I knew about bees until yesterday. I used to see them about the place from time to time, busy enough, no doubt, but really no busier than I was ; and as they were not much interested in me they had no reason to complain that I was not much interested in them. But since yesterday, when I read a book which dealt fully, not only with the public life of the bee, but with the most intimate details of its private life, I have looked at them with a new interest and a new sympathy. For there is no animal which

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does not get more out of life than the pitiable insect which Dr. Watts holds up as an example to us.

Hitherto, it may be, you have thought of the bee as an admirable and industrious insect, member of a model community which worked day and night to but one end—the well-being of the coming race. You knew perhaps that it fertilized the flowers, but you also know that the bee didn't know; you were aware that, if any bee deliberately went about trying to improve your delphiniums instead of gathering honey for the State, it would be turned down promptly by the other workers. For nothing is done in the hive without this one utilitarian purpose. Even the drones take their place in the scheme of things; a minor place in the stud; and when the next generation is assured, and the drones cease to be useful and can now only revert to the ornamental, they are ruthlessly cast out.

It comes, then, to this. The bee devotes its whole life to preparing for the next generation. But what is the next generation going to do? It is going to spend its whole life preparing for the third generation . . . and so on for ever.

An admirable community, the moralists tell us. Poor moralists! To miss so much of the joy of life; to deny oneself the pleasure (to mention only one among many) of reclining lazily on one's back in a snap-dragon, watching the little white clouds sail past upon a sea of blue; to miss these things for no other reason than that the next generation

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may also have an opportunity of missing them—is that admirable? What do the bees think that they are doing? If they live a life of toil and self-sacrifice merely in order that the next generation may live a life of equal toil and self-sacrifice, what has been gained? Ask the next bee you meet what it thinks it is doing in this world, and the only answer it can give you is, 'Keeping up the supply of bees.' Is that an admirable answer? How much more admirable if it could reply that it was eschewing all pleasure and living the life of a galley-slave in order that the next generation might have leisure to paint the poppy a more glorious scarlet. But no. The next generation is going at it just as hard for the same unproductive end; it has no wish to leave anything behind it—a new colour, a new scent, a new idea. It has one object only in this world—more bees. Could any scheme of life be more sterile?

Having come to this conclusion about the bee, I took fresh courage. I saw at once that it was the artist in Man which made him less contemptible than the Bee. That god-like person the grower of wheat assumed his proper level. Bread may be necessary to existence, but what is the use of existence if you are merely going to employ it in making bread? True, the farmer makes bread, not only for himself, but for the miner; and the miner produces coal—not only for himself, but for the farmer; and the farmer also produces bread for the maker of boots, who produces boots, not only for himself, but for the farmer and

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the miner. But you are still getting no further. It is the Life of the Bee over again, with no other object in it but mere existence. If this were all, there would be nothing to write on our tombstones but 'Born 1800; Died 1880. *He lived till then.*'

But it is not all, because—and here I strike my breast proudly—because of us artists. Not only can we write on Shakespeare's tomb, 'He wrote *Hamlet*' or 'He was not for an age, but for all time', but we can write on a contemporary baker's tomb, 'He provided bread for the man who wrote *Hamlet*,' and on a contemporary butcher's tomb, 'He was not only for himself, but for Shakespeare.' We perceive, in fact, that the only matter upon which any worker, other than the artist, can congratulate himself, whether he be manual-worker, brain-worker, surgeon, judge, or politician, is that he is helping to make the world tolerable for the artist. It is only the artist who will leave anything behind him. He is the fighting man, the man who counts; the others are merely the Army Service Corps of civilization. A world without its artists, a world of bees, would be as futile and as meaningless a thing as an army composed entirely of the A.S.C.

Possibly you put in a plea here for the explorer and the scientist. The explorer perhaps may stand alone. His discovery of a peak in Darien is something in itself, quite apart from the happy possibility that Keats may be tempted to bring it into a sonnet. Yes, if a Beef-Essence-Merchant

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has only provided sustenance for an Explorer he has not lived in vain, however much the poets and the painters recoil from his wares. But of the scientist I am less certain. I fancy that his invention of the telephone (for instance) can only be counted to his credit because it has brought the author into closer touch with his publisher.

So we artists (yes, and explorers) may be of good faith. They may try to pretend, these others, in their little times of stress, that we are nothing—decorative, inessential; that it is they who make the world go round. This will not upset us. We could not live without them; true. But (a much more bitter thought) they would have no reason for living at all, were it not for us.

THE HONOUR OF YOUR COUNTRY

WE were resting after the first battle of the Somme. Naturally all the talk in the Mess was of after-the-war. Ours was the H.Q. Mess, and I was the only subaltern; the youngest of us was well over thirty. With a gravity befitting our years and (except for myself) our rank, we discussed not only restaurants and revues, but also Reconstruction.

The Colonel's idea of Reconstruction included a large army of conscripts. He did not call them conscripts. The fact that he had chosen to be a soldier himself, out of all the professions open to him, made it difficult for him to understand why a million others should not do the same without compulsion. At any rate, we must have the men. The one thing the war had taught us was that we must have a real Continental army.

I asked why. 'Theirs not to reason why' on parade, but in the H.Q. Mess on active service the Colonel is a fellow human being. So I asked him why we wanted a large army after the war.

For the moment he was at a loss. Of course, he might have said 'Germany', had it not been decided already that there would be no Germany after the war. He did not like to say 'France', seeing that we were even then enjoying the hos-

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pitality of the most delightful of French villages. So, after a little hesitation, he said 'Spain'.

At least he put it like this :—

• 'Of course, we must have an army, a large army.'

'But why?' I said again.

'How else can you—can you defend the honour of your country?'

'The Navy.'

'The Navy! Pooh! The Navy isn't a weapon of attack; it's a weapon of defence.'

'But you said "defend".'

'Attack,' put in the Major oracularly, 'is the best defence.'

'Exactly.'

I hinted at the possibilities of blockade. The Colonel was scornful. 'Sitting down under an insult for months and months,' he called it, until you starved the enemy into surrender. He wanted something much more picturesque, more immediately effective than that. (Something, presumably, more like the Somme.)

'But give me an example,' I said, 'of what you mean by "insults" and "honour".'

Whereupon he gave me this extraordinary example of the need for a large army.

'Well, supposing,' he said, 'that fifty English women in Madrid were suddenly murdered, what would you do?'

I thought for a moment, and then said that I should probably decide not to take my wife to Madrid until things had settled down a bit.

'I'm supposing that you're Prime Minister,' said the Colonel, a little annoyed. 'What is England going to do?'

'Ah! . . . Well, one might do nothing. After all, what is one to do? One can't restore them to life.'

The Colonel, the Major, even the Adjutant, expressed his contempt for such a cowardly policy. So I tried again.

'Well,' I said, 'I might decide to murder fifty Spanish women in London, just to even things up.'

The Adjutant laughed. But the Colonel was taking it too seriously for that.

'Do you mean it?' he asked.

'Well, what would *you* do, sir?'

'Land an army in Spain,' he said promptly, and show them what it meant to treat English women like that.'

'I see. They would resist of course?'

'No doubt.'

'Yes. But equally without doubt we shall win in the end?'

'Certainly.'

'And so re-establish England's honour.'

'Quite so.'

'I see. Well, sir, I really think my way is the better. To avenge the fifty murdered English women, you are going to kill (say) 100,000 Spaniards who have had no connexion with the murders, and 50,000 Englishmen who are even less concerned. Indirectly also you will cause

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the death of hundreds of guiltless Spanish women and children, besides destroying the happiness of thousands of English wives and mothers. Surely my way—of murdering only fifty innocents—is just as effective and much more humane.'

'That's nonsense,' said the Colonel shortly.

'And the other is war.'

We were silent for a little, and then the Colonel poured himself out a whisky.

'All the same,' he said, as he went back to his seat, 'you haven't answered my question.'

'What was that, sir?'

'What you would do in the case I mentioned. Seriously.'

'Oh! Well, I stick to my first answer. I would do nothing—except, of course, ask for an explanation and an apology. If you *can* apologize for that sort of thing.'

'And if they were refused?'

'Have no more official relations with Spain.'

'That's all you would do?'

'Yes.'

'And you think that that is consistent with the honour of a great nation like England?'

'Perfectly.'

'Oh! Well, I don't.'

An indignant silence followed.

'May I ask *you* a question now, sir?' I said at last.

'Well?'

'Suppose this time England begins. Suppose we murder all the Spanish women in London

first. What are you going to do—as Spanish Premier?’

‘Er—I don’t quite——’

‘Are you going to order the Spanish Fleet to sail for the mouth of the Thames, and hurl itself upon the British fleet?’

‘Of course not. She has no fleet.’

‘Then do you agree with the—er Spanish Colonel, who goes about saying that Spain’s honour will never be safe until she has a fleet as big as England’s?’

‘That’s ridiculous. They couldn’t possibly.’

‘Then what *could* Spain do in the circumstances?’

‘Well, she—er—she could—er—protest.’

‘And would that be consistent with the honour of a small nation like Spain?’

‘In the circumstances,’ said the Colonel unwillingly, ‘er—yes.’

‘So that what it comes to is this. Honour only demands that you should attack the other man if you are much bigger than he is. When a man insults my wife, I look him carefully over; if he is a stone heavier than I, then I satisfy my honour by a mild protest. But if he only has one leg, and is three stone lighter, honour demands that I should jump on him.’

‘We’re talking of nations,’ said the Colonel gruffly, ‘not of men. It’s a question of prestige.’

‘Which would be increased by a victory over Spain?’

The Major began to get nervous. After all,

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I was only a subaltern. He tried to cool the atmosphere a little.

'I don't know why poor old Spain should be dragged into it like this,' he said, with a laugh. 'I had a very jolly time in Madrid years ago.'

'Oh, I only gave Spain as an example,' said the Colonel casually.

'It might just as well have been Switzerland?' I suggested.

There was silence for a little.

'Talking of Switzerland——' I said, as I knocked out my pipe.

'Oh, go on,' said the Colonel, with a good-humoured shrug. 'I've brought this on myself.'

'Well, sir, what I was wondering was—What would happen to the honour of England if fifty English women were murdered at Interlaken?'

The Colonel was silent.

'However large an army we had——' I went on.

The Colonel struck a match.

'It's a funny thing, honour,' I said. 'And prestige.'

The Colonel pulled at his pipe.

'Just fancy,' I murmured, 'the Swiss can do what they like to British subjects in Switzerland, and we can't get at them. Yet England's honour does not suffer, the world is no worse a place to live in, and one can spend quite a safe holiday at Interlaken.'

'I remember being there in '94,' began the Major hastily

OUR LEARNED FRIENDS

I DO not know why the Bar has always seemed the most respectable of the professions, a profession which the hero of almost any novel could adopt without losing caste. But so it is. A schoolmaster can be referred to contemptuously as an usher; a doctor is regarded humorously as a licensed murderer; a solicitor is always retiring to gaol for making away with trust funds, and, in any case, is merely an attorney; while a civil servant sleeps from ten to four every day, and is only waked up at sixty in order to be given a pension. But there is no humorous comment to be made upon the barrister—unless it is to call him ‘my learned friend’. He has much more right than the actor to claim to be a member of *the* profession. I don’t know why. Perhaps it is because he walks about the Temple in a top-hat.

So many of one’s acquaintances at some time or other have ‘eaten dinners’ that one hardly dares to say anything against the profession. Besides, one never knows when one may not want to be defended. However, I shall take the risk, and put the barrister in the dock. ‘Gentlemen of the jury, observe this well-dressed gentleman before you. What shall we say about him?’

Let us begin by asking ourselves what we expect from a profession. In the first place, cer-

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tainly, we expect a living, but I think we want something more than that. If we were offered a thousand a year to walk from Charing Cross to Barnet every day, reasons of poverty might compel us to accept the offer, but we should hardly be proud of our new profession. We should prefer to earn a thousand a year by doing some more useful work. Indeed, to a man of any fine feeling the profession of Barnet-walking would only be tolerable if he could persuade himself that by his exertions he was helping to revive the neglected art of pedestrianism, or to make more popular the neglected beauties of Barnet ; if he could hope that, after his threehundredth journey, inquisitive people would begin to follow him, wondering what he was after, and so come suddenly upon the old Norman church at the cross-roads, or, if they missed this, at any rate upon a much better appetite for their dinner. That is to say, he would have to persuade himself that he was walking, not only for himself, but also for the community.

It seems to me, then, that a profession is a noble or an ignoble one, according as it offers or denies to him who practises it the opportunity of working for some other end than his own advancement. A doctor collects fees from his patients, but he is aiming at something more than pounds, shillings, and pence ; he is out to put an end to suffering. A schoolmaster earns a living by teaching, but he does not feel that he is fighting only for himself ; he is a crusader on behalf

of education. The artist, whatever his medium, is giving a message to the world, expressing the truth as he sees it; for his own profit, perhaps, but not for that alone. All these and a thousand other ways of living have something of nobility in them. We enter them full of high resolves. We tell ourselves that we will follow the light as it has been revealed to us; that our ideals shall never be lowered; that we will refuse to sacrifice our principles to our interests. We fail, of course. The painter finds that 'Mother's Darling' brings in the stuff, and he turns out Mother's Darlings mechanically. The doctor neglects research and cultivates instead a bedside manner. The school-master drops all his theories of education and conforms hastily to those of his employers. We fail, but it is not because the profession is an ignoble one; we had our chances. Indeed, the light is still there for those who look. It beckons to us.

Now what of the Bar? Is the barrister after anything other than his own advancement? He follows what gleam? What are his ideals? Never mind whether he fails more often or less often than others to attain them; I am not bothering about that. I only want to know what it is that he is after. In the quiet hours when we are alone with ourselves and there is nobody to tell us what fine fellows we are, we come sometimes upon a weak moment in which we wonder, not how much money we are earning, nor how famous we are becoming, but what good we are doing. If a barrister ever has such a moment, what is

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his consolation? It can only be that he is helping Justice to be administered. If he is to be proud of his profession, and in that lonely moment tolerant of himself, he must feel that he is taking a noble part in the vindication of legal right, the punishment of legal wrong. But he must do more than this. Just as the doctor, with increased knowledge and experience, becomes a better fighter against disease, advancing himself, no doubt, but advancing also medical science; just as the schoolmaster, having learnt new and better ways of teaching, can now give a better education to his boys, increasing thereby the sum of knowledge; so the barrister must be able to tell himself that the more expert he becomes as an advocate, the better will he be able to help in the administration of this Justice which is his ideal.

Can he tell himself this? I do not see how he can. His increased expertness will be of increased service to himself, of increased service to his clients, but no ideal will be the better served by reason of it. Let us take a case—*Smith v. Jones*. Counsel is briefed for Smith. After examining the case he tells himself in effect this: 'As far as I can see, the Law is all on the other side. Luckily, however, sentiment is on our side. Given an impressionable jury, there's just a chance that we might pull it off. It's worth trying.' He tries, and if he is sufficiently expert he pulls it off. A triumph for himself, but what has happened to the ideal? Did he even think, 'Of course I'm bound to do the best for my client, but he's in

the wrong, and I hope we lose?' I imagine not. The whole teaching of the Bar is that he must not bother about justice, but only about his own victory. What ultimately, then, is he after? What does the Bar offer its devotees—beyond material success?

I asked just now what were a barrister's ideals. Suppose we ask instead, What is the ideal barrister? If one spoke loosely of an ideal doctor, one would not necessarily mean a titled gentleman in Harley Street. An ideal schoolmaster is not synonymous with the Headmaster of Eton or the owner of the most profitable preparatory school. But can there be an ideal barrister other than a successful barrister? The eager young writer, just beginning a literary career, might fix his eyes upon Francis Thompson rather than upon Sir Hall Caine; the eager young clergyman might dream dreams over the Life of Father Damien more often than over the Life of the Archbishop of Canterbury; but to what star can the eager young barrister hitch his wagon, save to the star of material success? If he does not see himself as Sir Edward Carson, it is only because he thinks that perhaps after all Sir John Simon's manner is the more effective.

There may be other answers to the questions I have asked than the answers I have given, but it is no answer to ask me how the law can be administered without barristers. I do not know; nor do I know how the roads can be swept without getting somebody to sweep them. But that

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would not disqualify me from saying that road-sweeping was an unattractive profession. So also I am entitled to my opinion about the Bar, which is this. That because it offers material victories only and never spiritual ones, that because there can be no standard by which its disciples are judged save the earthly standard, that because there is no place within its ranks for the altruist or the idealist—for these reasons the Bar is not one of the noble professions.

THE DIARY HABIT

A NEWSPAPER has been lamenting the decay of the diary-keeping habit, with the natural result that several correspondents have written to say that they have kept diaries all their lives. No doubt all these diaries now contain the entry, 'Wrote to the *Daily* — to deny the assertion that the diary-keeping habit is on the wane.' Of such little things are diaries made.

I suppose this is the reason why diaries are so rarely kept nowadays—that nothing ever happens to anybody. A diary would be worth writing up if it could be written like this :—

Monday. 'Another exciting day. Shot a couple of hooligans on my way to business and was forced to give my card to the police. On arriving at the office was surprised to find the building on fire, but was just in time to rescue the confidential treaty between England and Switzerland. Had this been discovered by the public, war would infallibly have resulted. Went out to lunch and saw a runaway elephant in the Strand. Thought little of it at the time, but mentioned it to my wife in the evening. She agreed that it was worth recording.'

Tuesday. 'Letter from solicitor informing me that I have come into £1,000,000 through the will of an Australian gold-digger named Tomkins. On referring to my diary I find that I saved

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his life two years ago by plunging into the Serpentine. This is very gratifying. Was late at the office as I had to look in at the Palace on the way, in order to get knighted, but managed to get a good deal of work done before I was interrupted by a madman with a razor, who demanded £100. Shot him after a desperate struggle. Tea at an A B C, where I met the Duke of ——. Fell into the Thames on my way home, but swam ashore without difficulty.'

Alas! we cannot do this. Our diaries are very prosaic, very dull indeed. They read like this:—

Monday. 'Felt inclined to stay in bed this morning and send an excuse to the office, but was all right after a bath and breakfast. Worked till 1-30 and had lunch. Afterwards worked till five, and had my hair cut on the way home. After dinner read *A Man's Passion*, by Theodora Popgood. Rotten. Went to bed at eleven.'

Tuesday. 'Had a letter from Jane. Did some good work in the morning, and at lunch met Henry, who asked me to play golf with him on Saturday. Told him I was playing with Peter, but said I would like a game with him on the Saturday after. However, it turned out he was playing with William then, so we couldn't fix anything up. Bought a pair of shoes on my way home, but think they will be too tight. The man says, though, that they will stretch.'

Wednesday. 'Played dominoes at lunch and won fivepence.'

If this sort of diary is now falling into decay,

the world is not losing much. But at least it is a harmless pleasure to some to enter up their day's doings each evening, and in years to come it may just possibly be of interest to the diarist to know that it was on Monday, 27 April, that he had his hair cut. Again, if in the future any question arose as to the exact date of Henry's decease, we should find in this diary proof that anyhow he was alive as late as Tuesday, 28 April. That might, though it probably won't, be of great importance. But there is another sort of diary which can never be of any importance at all. I make no apology for giving a third selection of extracts.

Monday. 'Rose at nine and came down to find a letter from Mary. How little we know our true friends! Beneath the mask of outward affection there may lurk unknown to us the serpent's tooth of jealousy. Mary writes that she can make nothing for my stall at the bazaar as she has her own stall to provide for. Ate my breakfast mechanically, my thoughts being far away. What, after all, is life? Meditated deeply on the inner cosmos till lunch-time. Afterwards I lay down for an hour and composed my mind. I was angry this morning with Mary. Ah, how petty! Shall I never be free from the bonds of my own nature? Is the better self within me never to rise to the sublime heights of selflessness of which it is capable? Rose at four and wrote to Mary, forgiving her. This has been a wonderful day for the spirit.'

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Yes ; I suspect that a good many diaries record adventures of the mind and soul for lack of stirring adventures to the body. If they cannot say, 'Attacked by a lion in Bond Street today,' they can at least say, 'Attacked by doubt in St. Paul's Cathedral.' Most people will prefer, in the absence of the lion, to say nothing, or nothing more important than 'Attacked by the hairdresser with a hard brush' ; but there are others who must get pen to paper somehow, and who find that only in regard to their emotions have they anything unique to say.

But, of course, there is ever within the breasts of all diarists the hope that their diaries may some day be revealed to the world. They may be discovered by some future generation, amazed at the simple doings of the twentieth century, or their publication may be demanded by the next generation, eager to know the inner life of the great man just dead. Best of all, they may be made public by the writers themselves in their autobiographies.

Yes ; the diarist must always have his eye on a possible autobiography. 'I remember,' he will write in that great work, having forgotten all about it, 'I distinctly remember'—and here he will refer to his diary—'meeting X. at lunch one Sunday and saying to him . . .'

What he said will not be of much importance, but it will show you what a wonderful memory the distinguished author retains in his old age.

THE HAPPIEST HALF-HOURS OF LIFE

YESTERDAY I should have gone back to school, had I been a hundred years younger.

My most frequent dream nowadays—or nowa-nights I suppose I should say—is that I am back at school, and trying to construe difficult passages from Greek authors unknown to me. That they are unknown is my own fault, as will be pointed out to me sternly in a moment. Meanwhile I stand up and gaze blankly at the text, wondering how it is that I can have forgotten to prepare it. ‘Er—him the—er—him the—the er many-wiled Odysseus—h’r’m—then, him addressing, the many-wiled Odysseus—er—addressed. Er—er—the er——’ And then, sweet relief, I wake up. That is one of my dreams; and another is that I am trying to collect my books for the next school and that an algebra, or whatever you like, is missing. The bell has rung, as it seems hours ago, I am searching my shelves desperately, I am diving under my table, behind the chair . . . I shall be late, I shall be late, late, late . . .

No doubt I had these bad moments in real life a hundred years ago. Indeed I must have had them pretty often that they should come back to me so regularly now. But it is curious that I should never dream that I am going back to

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school, for the misery of going back must have left a deeper mark on my mind than all the little accidental troubles of life when there. I was very happy at school ; but oh ! the utter wretchedness of the last day of the holidays.

One began to be apprehensive on the Monday. Foolish visitors would say sometimes on the Monday, 'When are you going back to school?' and make one long to kick them for their tactlessness. As well might they have said to a condemned criminal, 'When are you going to be hanged?' or, 'What kind of —er—knot do you think they'll use?' Throughout Monday and Tuesday we played the usual games, amused ourselves in the usual way, but with heavy hearts. In the excitement of the moment we would forget and be happy, and then suddenly would come the thought, 'We're going back on Wednesday.'

And on Tuesday evening we would bring a moment's comfort to ourselves by imagining that we were not going back on the morrow. Our favourite dream was that the school was burnt down early on Wednesday morning, and that a telegram arrived at breakfast apologizing for the occurrence, and pointing out that it would be several months before even temporary accommodation could be erected. No Vandal destroyed historic buildings so light-heartedly as we. And on Tuesday night we prayed that, if the lightnings of Heaven failed us, at least a pestilence should be sent in aid. Somehow, *somehow*, let the school be uninhabitable !

But the telegram never came. We woke on Wednesday morning as wakes the murderer on his last day. We took a dog or two for a walk ; we pretended to play a game of croquet. After lunch we donned the badges of our servitude. The comfortable, careless, dirty flannels were taken off, and the black coats and stiff white collars put on. At 3-30 an early tea was ready for us—something rather special, a last mockery of holiday. (Dressed crab, I remember, on one occasion, and I travelled with my back to the engine after it—a position I have never dared to assume since.) Then good-byes, tips, kisses, a last look, and—the 4-10 was puffing out of the station. And nothing, nothing had happened.

I can remember thinking in the train how unfair it all was. Fifty-two weeks in the year, I said to myself, and only fifteen of them spent at home. A child snatched from his mother at nine, and never again given back to her for more than two months at a time. 'Is this Russia?' I said ; and, getting no answer, could only comfort myself with the thought, 'This day twelve weeks !'

And once the incredible did happen. It was through no intervention of Providence ; no, it was entirely our own doing. We got near some measles, and for a fortnight we were kept in quarantine. I can say truthfully that we never spent a duller two weeks. There seemed to be nothing to do at all. The idea that we were working had to be fostered by our remaining shut up in one room most of the day, and within the limits of

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that room we found very little in the way of amusement. We were bored extremely. And always we carried with us the thought of Smith or Robinson taking our place in the Junior House team and making hundreds of runs. . . .

Because, of course, we were very happy at school really. The trouble was that we were so much happier in the holidays. I have had many glorious moments since I left school, but I have no doubt as to what have been the happiest half-hours in my life. They were the half-hours on the last day of term before we started home. We spent them on a lunch of our own ordering. It was the first decent meal we had had for weeks, and when it was over there were all the holidays before us. Life may have better half-hours than that to offer, but I have not met them.

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E. V. LUCAS

E. V. Lucas is probably the most prolific of modern essayists. He was born in 1868, and was at first privately educated and then sent to University College, London. He started his career as a journalist, and has attained a very high place among his contemporaries in the profession by becoming the chairman of a big publishing firm and also the assistant editor of *Punch*. Very early in his career he cultivated a passion for the writings of Charles Lamb, and today he is the greatest authority on Elia and his works. He has edited the works of Lamb with great scholarship and has written the most authentic and exhaustive biography of him.

Lucas has consciously endeavoured to adopt the manner and spirit of Charles Lamb in his essays. Writing of the greatness of Charles Lamb, he once said, 'Lamb lives and will live by virtue of being himself and expressing this self in a series of prose essays unsurpassed in their charm, prodigality of fancy and literary artifice, marked by profound commonsense, and starred with passages of great beauty, dazzling insight, and kindly capricious humour.' Lucas has himself a certain measure of all these gifts; his style is personal, discursive and rambling after the manner of the essayist who is his model, and has considerable charm and humour. But unlike gentle Elia, Lucas is often too satirical and too full of urbanity and sophistication to be called Elia's successor in the art of the essay.

Lucas possesses a rare gift of style. A critic in the *Times Literary Supplement* once remarked that Lucas and Belloc will be considered as the best modern writers of English prose 'having regard to their manner only'. He

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further added 'that as all prose style must be formed on models, their prose is good because their models are good'. Lucas has a very attractive, polished and lucid manner, and deals with the most commonplace topics with a quaintness in his attitude. There is, besides, a certain artless exaggeration which adds to the charm of the manner and matter of his essays.

Lucas has attempted successfully different types of literature—biography, the novel, the essay, books of travel, poetry and has invented a kind of discursive entertainment which is a blend of the novel, the essay and the letter, forming an amusing mixture of different types. He is, besides, a critic of keen discernment and the most gifted of anthologists. *The Open Road* and *The Friendly Town* are anthologies of prose and verse chosen with unrivalled soundness of taste. The most popular among his collections of essays are *One Day and Another*, *Old Lamps for New*, *Turning Things Over*, *Character and Comedy*, *Wisdom While You Wait*.

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4. **faux pas** : *Fr.* false step.

the over : a term in cricket.

5. **Sidney Colvin** (1845–1927) : Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge (1873–85). Author of many contributions on art like *Drawings by Old Masters at Oxford*, *Early Engraving and Engravers in England*. Edited the Letters of Keats and wrote an excellent study of Keats in the English Men of Letters Series. A friend of Robert Louis Stevenson whose letters and works he also edited. He was a friend of many famous men of letters with whom he corresponded regularly.

George Meredith (1828–1909) : poet and novelist. His most well-known novels are *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *Evan Harrington*, *The Egoist* and *Diana of the Crossways*.

Henry James (1843–1916) : an American writer of great distinction who lived mostly in England and

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wrote a number of novels. *Roderick Hudson, Portrait of a Lady, The Ambassadors, The Golden Bowl* are among his well-known works.

Andrew Lang (1844-1912): poet, novelist, historian and Greek scholar. He was joint author along with others of the admirable translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into excellent English prose. Among his historical writings may be mentioned *John Knox and the Reformation, The Maid of France, The Mystery of Mary Stuart*. He was a most prolific and versatile writer.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924): born of Polish parents he became a sailor in a French vessel and later in an English merchant ship. In 1894 he left the seafaring life, and devoted himself to literature. His most popular novels are *Lord Jim, The Nigger of Narcissus, Within the Tides*. Most of his writings treat of life on the seas.

W. E. Henley (1849-1903): poet and journalist. A great friend of Robert Louis Stevenson with whom he collaborated in writing the plays entitled *Beau Austin, Deacon Brodie*, etc. Among his best-known poems are 'Invictus', (Out of the Night that covers me) and 'The Song of the Sword'.

7. **Barbizon school**: a French village which gave its name to a school of painting whose leaders were Corot, Millet, and Dubigny. They put aside the conventional idea of 'subject' and went directly to the fields and woods for their inspiration. The leaders of the school lived in Barbizon, and hence the name.

9. **Corot** (1796-1875): a famous French landscape-painter.

Rembrandt (1609-1669): The greatest painter of the Dutch school. He is known as the 'King of Shadows' from his practice of painting objects emerging in the midst of darkness. He portrayed old wrinkled faces with exceptional skill.

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- Velasquez** (1599–1660): the great Spanish painter. Philip IV of Spain refused to be painted by anyone else.
- Gainsborough** (1727–88): English portrait and landscape painter. 'The Blue Boy' and 'The Harvest Waggon' are among his best-known works.
15. **Miss Jewett**: Sarah Orne Jewett (1849–1909) an American author who wrote many stories of American life. *The Country of the Pointed Firs* is her masterpiece and was praised by Richard Garnett as consisting of 'thirty little masterpieces'. *The Tory Lover* and *Old Friends and New* are among her other works.
17. **Mr. Dobson**: Henry Austin Dobson (1840–1921) poet and critic. A great authority on English literature of the eighteenth century, and author of biographies of Steele, Goldsmith, Walpole, Richardson and Fanny Burney. He also published several volumes of essays.
- Twelves**: duodecimos or twelvemos; books of which each sheet forms twelve leaves or twenty-four pages.
18. **Naboth**: The Jezreelite, owned a vineyard and it was coveted by Ahab. Naboth refused to surrender it, and Jezebel caused Naboth to be stoned to death by accusing him of having spoken blasphemy, and the vineyard was taken by Ahab. (See *1. Kings* xxi.)
- Uriah the Hittite**: an officer in King David's army who had the beautiful Bathsheba for his wife. David fell in love with Bathsheba and sent away Uriah to be killed in battle so that he might marry Bathsheba.
19. **W.P.K.**: William Paton Ker (1855–1923) professor of poetry at Oxford. A great scholar and author of many learned books, such as *The Dark Ages*, *Essays on Medieval Literature*.

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- Poetical Works of Thomas Little:** Thomas Moore, the Irish poet and contemporary of Byron, began his poetical career under the pseudonym of Thomas Little. Byron refers to him by this name in *English Bards and Scottish Reviewers*.
20. **Friendship's Garland:** published in 1871. One of the prose works of Matthew Arnold containing his criticism of English society, and written in a satirical manner.
21. **Southey** (1774–1843): Poet Laureate and friend of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Hazlitt. He wrote an immense amount of both verse and prose, a good deal of which is seldom read now. His most popular prose work is his *Life of Nelson*.
27. **Cerberus:** the dog with three heads that guards the entrance of Hades. Some poets have represented him with fifty heads; others with a hundred. He is said to be placed by Pluto on the further side of the Styx in order to prevent the living from descending to the infernal regions and the dead from escaping into the world.

HILAIRE BELLOC

Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton are frequently mentioned together in contemporary periodicals. In fact one of the modern journals invented a new word 'Chesterbelloc' by which to refer to these two writers in the same breath! Chesterton once said that his only claim to remembrance by posterity was that he had taken part in a public debate with Belloc. These two writers have not at any time collaborated in their works except occasionally when Chesterton illustrated some of the novels of Belloc. They are a complement to each other in several ways, and they have the same attitude towards the modern world. They are ardent believers in the Catholic Church and agree in looking upon the Protestant revolution of England as the worst blunder in England's history. They are

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both vehement in their denunciations of the irreligious, and since the days of Newman, Catholicism has not had such strong advocates as these. They also agree in their admiration of the middle ages and look upon the modern world with curious dismay. Of the two, Belloc has had a more varied career and a wider experience of men and affairs. He has been soldier, professor, member of Parliament, journalist, farmer and tramp.

Joseph Hilaire Pierre Belloc was born in 1870, the son of a French barrister who had married an Englishwoman. He was educated in England, and was sent to France to undergo military training in the French army. He served as a gunner in the artillery stationed at Toul; he has recorded his experiences of this period in the essays entitled, 'The First Day's March' and 'The Guns'. His knowledge of military life acquired during this time, enabled him to write and lecture on the conduct of the last Great War when it was in progress.

In 1892 he returned to England after completing his training, joined Balliol College, Oxford, and distinguished himself by winning a first class degree in the History School. From the beginning his natural bent was for historical studies, and he started his literary career as a writer of historical biographies. He has attempted to recreate English history from his own point of view, and wrote several interesting biographies of historical personages like Joan of Arc, Danton, Robespierre, Marie Antoinette. He has all the excellent qualities of a literary historian, but for accuracy of facts he is no more reliable than his great compeers of the last century, Macaulay and Froude. Belloc was member of Parliament for four years representing Salford, and for another four years he served as Professor of English Literature in East London College. In 1903 he obtained the rights of a British citizen as a naturalized British subject.

Belloc is a versatile writer, and there is no type of literature excepting the drama which he has not attempted. He is a poet, novelist, essayist, critic, historian, biographer, story-teller and topographer. In his younger days

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he tried the life of a tramp, having taken a vow that he would go from Toul to Rome without riding an animal or using any wheeled vehicle and hear mass in St. Peter's. He walked through the south of France, Switzerland and Italy, and he has told the story of this tour in his most delightful travel book *The Path to Rome*.

He is most prolific as an essayist. He can write on anything, something, everything and even on nothing! A good many of his essays are on subjects of topical interest and therefore ephemeral, but a great bulk of them in which he has shown the true spirit of the essayist in the manner of Montaigne and Charles Lamb, are bound to survive. *On Something, On Everything, This and That, On Nothing, Hills and the Sea* contain some of his best essays. They are mostly personal, reflective, narrative, and occasionally interspersed with interesting digressions and pithy maxims. They are indeed 'loose sallies of the mind'.

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- 31-32. **sickle and the scythe**: farmers use the sickle for reaping corn and the scythe for cutting grass for hay. Time can take only what is ripe and so should be represented by a sickle; death always comes too soon, and so should be represented by a scythe.
34. **Promethean**: Prometheus was a great benefactor of humanity. His name signifies 'forethought' as that of his brother Epimetheus denotes 'afterthought'. He stole fire from heaven and taught mortals the use of all fine arts. Zeus punished him by chaining him to Mt. Caucasus where each day his liver was eaten by vultures, which was restored in the succeeding night. Hercules killed the vultures and released Prometheus. Anyone endowed with extraordinary skill or punished in too severe a manner is referred to as Promethean. Here the epithet refers to skill and capacity.
36. **Angelus**: devotional exercise commemorating the Incarnation, said by Roman Catholics at morning,

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- noon, and sunset, at the sound of a bell. The opening words of the prayer are *Angelus domini* (O.E.D.).
42. **Argus**: 'the all-seeing.' A monster with a hundred eyes who was appointed by Hera to watch her rival Io whom Zeus had converted into a cow. But Hermes slew him by command of Zeus, and Hera placed the eyes of Argus in the tail of the peacock. Ulysses's dog was named Argus, and he was the first to recognize his master when he returned to Ithaca after an absence of twenty years.
47. The Greek quotation is translated by the author himself in the preceding lines.
54. **retreat from Moscow**: the reference is to Napoleon Bonaparte's disastrous Russian expedition in 1812.
55. **Bridge of Beresina**: the allusion is to the disastrous passage of the French army in November 1812 during their retreat from Moscow. It is said that 12,000 of the fugitives were drowned in the stream, and 16,000 were taken prisoners by the Russians. Hence the Russian saying, 'Every streamlet shall prove a new Beresina' meaning 'every streamlet shall prove their ruin and overthrow'. (*The Reader's Handbook*.)
61. **jingo**: bellicose, blustering patriot.
68. **Everyman**: a popular morality play of the fifteenth century. The dramatis personæ are God, Everyman, Death, Fellowship, Good Deeds, Knowledge, Beauty, Strength. Everyman is summoned by Death and finds that no one of his friends except Good Deeds will accompany him.
69. **Ronsard** (1524-85): French lyric poet and a favourite of the French court. He created a new poetic language and exercised a great deal of influence on the Elizabethan sonnet-writers.

G. K. CHESTERTON

G. K. Chesterton is one of the most entertaining and stimulating writers of the present day. His writings are

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permeated with a spirit of cheerfulness and robust enjoyment of every aspect of modern life. He has a keen eye for the comical in men and manners and he is determined to be ever mirthful. He hates pessimism and melancholy just as much as he dislikes the faddist or the ungodly. In laying stress on the necessity for a sense of humour in all our dealings, he has used the paradox as the most suitable weapon; and the paradox in his hands has very nearly become a mannerism and a vice in his style. The uncommon aspect of the commonplace appeals to him very quickly, and so his writings provoke a great deal of thought in the reader. For instance, he asserts, 'The actual raising of the standard of athletics has been bad for national athleticism;' 'The really modest people make a great deal of noise;' 'To be simple for charity is the state of a saint, to be simple for money is that of a filthy old fool;' 'The heroic desire to return to nature is of course in some respects rather like the heroic desire of a kitten to return to its own tail.' This trick of paradox has been the most striking characteristic of his style and has in the end become a pernicious trick.

Chesterton has written on almost every subject of living interest—politics, religion, sociology, biography, criticism, travel, and fiction. He has written delightful poems full of vigorous rhythm and stirring appeal. *The Flying Inn* contains some of his best poems, and the most popular among the others is *The Ballad of the White Horse*. His literary criticism is often provocative and always full of vitality and rich in commonsense. His books on Dickens and Browning are the most ingenious contributions to English literary criticism. He is the author of brilliant detective stories like *The Innocence of Father Brown*, *The Wisdom of Father Brown*, and novels with amazing plots like *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* and *The Man who was Thursday*. He has published, besides, innumerable volumes of essays with characteristic titles as *All Things Considered*, *Tremendous Trifles*, *Alarms and Discursions*, *The Defendant*, *What's Wrong with the World*.

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Chesterton is a sort of explosive force in modern life.

‘There is something,’ he says, ‘spiritually suffocating about our life, not about our laws merely, but about our life.’ And he sets out as a reformer with a gift of laughter as his only weapon. He astonishes the reader by the ingenuity of his attack, the cleverness of his paradox, his refreshingly frank statements on human nature, and the might and vigour with which he defends his favourite opinion. He is a hater of cant in the true Johnsonian manner. He becomes incensed at anything that threatens the mirthfulness of life. He is opposed to Tolstoy’s cult of simplicity, because simplicity in his opinion, will deprive life of all its charm.

No writer of modern times excepting George Bernard Shaw has been so frequently caricatured in the papers as has G.K.C. He has commanded the attention of the public from the beginning of his journalistic career. Born in 1874 in London, and educated at St. Paul’s School, he underwent training in the Slade School of Art with a view to become a professional artist; but literature attracted him and journalism has possessed him as one of its untiring votaries. His contributions to the press are meant not for intellectuals but for the common man. ‘One modern critic has said with true discernment that Chesterton’s philosophy ‘is sublimated public opinion minus the opinion of the intellectuals’.

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73. **gets the sack** : to dismiss one from service. ‘At one time manufacturers who employed those who worked at home, put the work to be done in a sack or bag. If when brought back the work was satisfactory, the bag or sack was filled again with materials; if not it was laid empty on the counter, and the sack was returned. It meant that the person would no longer be employed by the firm.’

74. **monstrum horrendum, informe** : horrible ill-shaped monster.

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75. **Mænads**: the name of the Bacchantes or priestesses of Bacchus represented with dishevelled hair and garlands of ivy.
Mumbo-Jumbo: a grotesque African bogie said to have been worshipped by certain barbarous tribes. Any object of senseless veneration.
76. **Bacchantes**: see note on Maenads above.
78. **Mr. Carnegie** (1835-1919): the son of a poor emigrant to America, he began as a factory boy at the age of thirteen. By his frugality and shrewdness he became enormously rich. He published in 1900 his *Gospel of Wealth*, in which he explained that a man who dies rich dies disgraced. In 1901 he distributed his wealth in a number of famous benefactions, the most important of them being his provision for public libraries in Great Britain and the United States, and several other trusts for research studies.
- Solomon**: King of Israel, son of David, the wisest of the Kings mentioned in the Old Testament. He is said to have built the Temple in Jerusalem. His wisdom is illustrated by the judgement he gave in the dispute over a child, between two women who claimed it each as her own. (See *1 Kings* iii. 16-28).
- Mr. Pierpont Morgan**: distinguished American millionaire who died in 1913.
79. **Loisy**: French Catholic theologian. Began a controversy on the origin of the scriptures.
Harnack: theologian. Author of *Wesen des Christentums*. Loisy wrote a reply to this book.
81. **the funeral games of Patroclus**: Patroclus, one of the Greek heroes and a friend of Achilles, was slain by Hector in the Trojan war.
83. **Tolstoy** (1828-1910): Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy was one of the greatest personalities of modern Russia before the Revolution. He was heir to great wealth and possessions, but he

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renounced almost all his property, and lived the life of a poor man. He evolved a gospel of life out of deep search and intellectual convictions; and the chief tenets of his gospel were passive resistance to all kinds of evil force, abolition of nationalities and governments, surrender of all luxury, and life to be lived in utter simplicity with the barest necessities of food and clothing. He wrote amazingly powerful novels, stories, plays and discussions on moral and ethical questions. His writings were censored by the Imperial government of his day, but he became as great a power as Voltaire was in France before the French Revolution, and his influence spread far beyond Russia. His chief works are *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection*, *What is Art?* and *Confession*. Chesterton in this admirable essay criticizes Tolstoy's gospel of simplicity as being too exaggerated, and indicates that simplicity carried to a literal extent according to Christian tenets, will make us appear ridiculous. Besides, beauty and colour are essential to life and should not be sacrificed for the sake of a puritanic ideal.

84. **Philistine** : the name of a warlike people who were the enemies of the Israelites. In modern English it has come to mean a person deficient in culture and enlightenment. This term was largely used by Matthew Arnold in attacking the illiberal tendencies of his age.
85. **Ibsen** (1828-1906): Henrik Ibsen, famous Norwegian dramatist who utilized his dramatic abilities for effecting social reform. He treated of the relation of the individual to his social environment, the shame and conventions that hinder his self-expression and especially the conventions of the married state. His most famous plays are *A Doll's House*, *Pillars of Society*, *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People*.

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Maeterlinck (born 1862): Belgian poet and dramatist who received the Nobel prize for literature in 1911. He deals with love and death as the two dark mysteries that govern men's lives.

Whitman (1819-92): the most original among American poets and thinkers whose *Leaves of Grass* roused a great deal of hostile criticism from the public. He was accused of having written books of an immoral tendency. Revolt against all convention was in fact his self-proclaimed mission.

87. '**Solomon in all his glory**': the reference is to Christ's Sermon on the Mount: 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' (See *Matthew* vi. 28, 29.)

89. **turn the cheek to the smiter, etc**: from Christ's Sermon on the Mount: 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.' (See *Matthew* v. 39, 40.)

90. **St. George and the dragon**: St. George, patron saint of England, was brought up to deeds of arms by 'the weird lady of the woods'. His body had three marks: a dragon on the breast, a garter round one of the legs, and a blood-red cross on the right arm. He killed the dragon of Libya to whom a damsel was daily sacrificed for food, delivered the King's daughter from becoming a victim to the dragon, and married her. St. George has been the patron saint of England from the days of Edward III. He is commemorated on 23 April.

Nero: Roman Emperor (A.D. 54-68) notorious for his tyranny and brutality. The burning of Rome in A.D. 64 is generally attributed to him, and he is said to have played on the fiddle while Rome was

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burning; hence the expression 'playing on the fiddle while Rome was burning'. Nero committed suicide in A.D. 68.

91. **Edward Lear** (1812-88): artist and writer of many limericks. Author of *The Book of Nonsense* and *Nonsense Songs, Stories and Botany*.

breaking of seals or the falling of stars: see *Revelations* vi. 12, 13.

Neo-Platonist philosophers: Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus founded a philosophical school combining Platonic ideas with oriental mysticism. The most well-known exponent of Neo-platonism was Hypatia who was murdered by the Alexandrian mob in A.D. 415.

92. **Armageddon**: the place according to the *Book of Revelations* where the Kings of the earth are to be gathered together for the 'battle of that great day of God Almighty'. (See *Revelations* xvi.)

Ragnorak: according to Scandinavian mythology, the twilight or last days of the gods, when the powers of evil and the gods fight, and both are destroyed, and a set of new gods appear and take charge of the Universe.

national limitation, etc.: limitation of population according to Malthusian principles of restriction in birth based on the doctrine that land could support only a limited number of people which should not be exceeded. Voltaire was a revolutionary of extremely advanced views, but even he would be shocked to hear some of the advanced views of modern men on the theory of population or on the ownership of land.

93. **Dr. Watts** (1674-1748): the author of many hymns which are very popular like, 'O God our help in ages past,' 'There is a land of pure delight' and 'Jesus shall reign wherever the sun'.

Messrs. Moody and Sankey: American evangelists; joint authors of several hymns, and together they

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carried on a revival campaign in England and America.

Quakers: the Society of Friends, a highly puritanical religious body of Christians founded by George Fox in 1648. The name was attributed to this sect because they were supposed to quake at the word of the Lord.

95. **The sight of His national city moved Him to tears**: (see *Luke* xix. 41-44).

'Behold an Israelite indeed': Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and said of him 'Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile'. (See *John* i. 47.)

96. **Calvary**: from Latin *Calvaria* which means a skull. In Greek it is *Golgotha*. It is the name of the mount on which Christ was crucified. Hence a life-size representation of the crucifixion is called Calvary. When Christ was crucified, the earth gaped and the sun was darkened at noonday. (See *Mark* xv.)

97. **Nero**: see note on page 90.

erotomaniac: a person suffering madness arising out of love.

98. **Louis XI** (1423-83): King of France. A perfect model of a tyrant. The States-General met but once in his reign and no talk of grievances was allowed.

Antoninus Pius (86-161): Roman Emperor whose reign was very prosperous and peaceful.

Aurelius: Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121-180): Roman Emperor and philosopher who recorded his meditations containing Stoic wisdom. See Matthew Arnold's essay on Marcus Aurelius.

Vincent de Paul (1576-1660): French divine founder of the order of 'Lazarites'. Established a hospital for galley slaves in Marseilles and another for foundlings in Paris.

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99. **Yankee** : nickname for an American. In America it is used only to denote the New Englander or New Yorker.
101. **Dancer** (1716-94): a notorious miser in whose filthy hovel large sums of money were discovered after his death.
- Rockefeller** : American millionaire, reputed one of the richest men on earth. * Born in 1839, he began life as an accountant, started an oil factory, absorbed his rivals, got control of the oil industry and created the Standard Oil Trust in 1870, substituting combination in the place of competition. One of the greatest philanthropists now living, he has distributed nearly £100,000,000 in public benefactions.
107. **Mr. Dickens** : the reference is to Dickens' story in prose entitled *A Christmas Carol*. The story is about Scrooge 'a grasping old sinner' who is converted to generous good temper by a series of dreams. As a result of his dreams he wakes up on Christmas morning an altered man. The moral influence of the story is excellent. Father Christmas is ever alive and active though he always complains of dying.
108. **Sir Richard Steele** (1672-1729): the friend of Addison with whose collaboration he published the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, the most popular periodicals of the day. **Sir Roger de Coverley** : an imaginary character who was portrayed at full length in the *Spectator* papers both by Addison and Steele. Sir Roger was meant to represent all that was virtuous, genial and amiable in a typical English country squire. One of the essays contains a description of Sir Roger's Christmas party.
- Ben Jonson** (1572-1637): poet and dramatist, greatest among Shakespeare's contemporaries. Author of *Every Man in his Humour*, *Volpone*, *The Silent Woman* and *The Alchemist*.

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Robin Hood: a legendary outlaw who is supposed to have been chief of a band of gallant robbers, whose duty was to plunder the rich and give relief to the poor. He is the hero of a number of popular ballads and tales.

ROBERT LYND

'Y. Y.' is a familiar name to readers of the *New Statesman* and other modern journals. Under this pen-name Robert Lynd has contributed a great many of his delightful essays which have been collected in books at present. He is an Irishman by birth and possesses all the subtlety and humour which are characteristic of that race. He was born in Belfast in 1879 and educated at the Royal Academical Institution and later at Queen's College, Belfast. His two early books on his native land entitled *Home Life in Ireland* and *Rambles in Ireland* contain a series of impressions of Irish scenery, history and men and manners and reveal the author's pride in the land of his birth.

'The world', he says 'is crying out just now for a return of good humour,' and it is this good humour that is the chief characteristic of all his essays. He has an innate sense of tolerance towards everything in modern life, and his good humour is the outcome of this tolerance. 'Lacking its good humour', he says, 'London would be one of the most uninhabitable of cities. Who would live amid the buzz of eight million spites?'

There is no subject which is too trivial or insignificant for his consideration. His ideas are sometimes deliberately whimsical and his arguments are equally perverse, but his manner is never laboured. He has not the urbanity of Lucas or the wit of Chesterton, but he is more genial than either of them. He is often reflective and writes with sympathy on all subjects. He can trip from one mood to another, from the gay to the grave, from the seemingly frivolous to the sober and thoughtful vein.

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The most entertaining of his collections of essays are *The Pleasures of Ignorance*, *The Blue Lion*, *The Money-Box*, *A Peal of Bells* and *The Orange Tree*.

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111. **Pekinese**: Chinese dog with long silky hair.

Hazlitt (1778-1830): one of the greatest essayists and critics. Author of *Table-Talk*, *Lectures on the English Poets* and *English Comic Writers*. A great walker in the country. See his essay *On Going a Journey* in which he describes the pleasures of walking in the countryside in England and re-collects his experiences of walking tours.

Stevenson (1850-94): novelist, story-teller, poet and essayist. He delighted in long walking tours. See his *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, and his essays entitled *An Apology for Idlers, Beggars and The Manse*.

Mr. Belloc: see introduction to Belloc's essays. A great walker. In his younger days, he walked from France to Rome having taken a vow that he would hear mass in St. Peters and would not use any animal or wheeled vehicle to reach Rome.

118. **the Fascisti**: the Italian socialists led by Sgr. Mussolini who took as their symbols the Roman fasces. The Fascist revolution was accomplished in 1922 and today the Fascist rule is flourishing in Italy.

119. **vin ordinaire**: ordinary wine.

131. **London seen from Westminster Bridge**: Wordsworth's famous sonnet beginning with 'Earth has not anything to show more fair'.

134. **jack-in-the-box**: toy figure that springs out of a box when opened.

137. **Coleridge** (1772-1834): poet, critic, philosopher, friend of Wordsworth and Charles Lamb, the greatest scholar and man of genius of his age.

Cottle (1770-1853): friend of Coleridge, Charles Lamb and Southey.

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- Borgia, Cesare** (1476-1507): a byword for treachery, violence and crime. He used to pretend to be friendly with his enemies, decoy them to his house and do away with them.
139. **Pleiades**: seven daughters of Atlas who were placed in heaven to form a group of stars.
142. **Stockton and Darlington Railway**: The earliest railway line in England connecting these two places, projected in 1825: George Stephenson drove the first passenger train on this line.
143. **Blake** (1757-1827): a great mystic poet, author of *Songs of Experience*, *Songs of Innocence*, *Jerusalem*, etc. The poem beginning with 'Tiger! Tiger! burning bright' is one of his most popular and well-known works.
- Ruskin** (1819-1900): economist, social reformer, art critic and one of the greatest teachers of the Victorian era, a writer of ornate prose style. Author of *Unto This Last*, *Sesame and Lilies*, *The Crown of Wild Olive*, etc. He waged war on the ugliness of industrialism and protested against the multiplication of factories and railways which ruined the beauty of the countryside.
145. **Notting Hill Kensington**: the reference is to Chesterton's famous book *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* in which he represents a mock Napoleon as the hero fighting against his neighbouring borough of Kensington.
149. **George Stephenson** (1781-1848): inventor of the locomotive steam engine.

A. A. MILNE

Milne is popular as the author of light comedies which have been very successful on the stage. *Mr. Pim Passes By*, *The Dover Road*, *The Truth About Blayds* are some of the most noteworthy among his plays. He has excelled himself also as a writer of delightful children's

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books, and *When we were very young* and *Winnie-the-Pooh* are sure to find a place in modern literature by the side of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan*.

Milne was born in 1883 and was educated at Westminster School, and had a brilliant career at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was the editor of the University journal, *The Granta*, and soon after leaving the University began his literary career in London. His gift for humorous writing soon attracted the attention of the public and he was invited to join the staff of *Punch* and was its assistant editor between 1906 and 1914. During the Great War he served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment for four years.

As an essayist and writer of racy prose he occupies a high rank among the moderns. He has the gift of being light-hearted, and has no other object except to amuse and to entertain his readers. He has a quick eye for the funny side of things, and is ever keen on making the reader laugh. There is more wit than humour in his essays and the wit is always stimulating. The most interesting of his books are *The Day's Play*, *Once a Week*, *The Holiday Round*, *If I May* and *Not That It Matters*.

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150. **Bach** (1685-1750): one of the greatest composers and musicians.

Velasquez: see note on page 9.

Phidias: the greatest sculptor of Greece. He was entrusted by Pericles with the superintendence of all works of art in Athens. He built the temple of Athena on the Acropolis called the Parthenon, and executed the colossal statue of ivory and gold of the Goddess. He also sculptured the statue of Olympian Zeus. He died a miserable death owing to the jealousy of his rivals in power.

151. **Dr. Isaac Watts**: see note on page 93. Watts was the author of 'Divine Songs for Children' which contains many poems on animals which indirectly

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teach moral lessons to children. The lines about the little busy bee are very famous.

154. **He was not for an age, but for all time:** Ben Jonson's lines on Shakespeare entitled 'To the Memory of my beloved Mr. Wm. Shakespeare'.

A Peak in Darien: Balboa the great explorer discovered the Isthmus of Panama and saw the Atlantic and the Pacific from the top of a mountain in Panama. Keats, the youngest of England's romantic poets when writing his beautiful sonnet entitled 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' compared his discovery of Homer to the discovery of the Pacific by the explorer. He mistakenly attributed the discovery to Cortez instead of to Balboa.

156. **H. Q.:** Head Quarters.

166. **Francis Thompson** (1859—1907): a great mystic and poet who lived a life of ill-health and extreme poverty. Author of *Hound of Heaven* and several other beautiful poems and many critical essays, the most well-known of them being on Shelley.

Sir Hall Caine (1853—1931): friend of Rossetti, and author of several novels of second-rate merit. He lived a prosperous life unlike Francis Thompson and was knighted and widely known.

Father Damien (1841—89): a Belgian priest who worked in the leper settlement in the island of Molokai, contracted the disease himself, but worked among the lepers till his death. His life was one of great sacrifice and heroism. R. L. Stevenson's essay on *Father Damien* contains an admirable tribute to his work.

Sir Edward Carson: brilliant lawyer and politician who was a bitter enemy of the claims of Ireland for freedom.

Sir John Simon: the most brilliant lawyer today in England, and his rise at the bar was unique. Latterly he has taken to a political career and has

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occupied several posts of responsibility in the Cabinet. He was Chairman of the Indian Statutory Commission, and since 1931 has been Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

173. **Vandal:** member of a barbarian tribe in Europe that ravaged France, Spain and Rome and destroyed many valuable books and works of art. Hence any wilful or ignorant destroyer of a work of art is known as a Vandal.

174. **The badges of our servitude:** the school uniform.